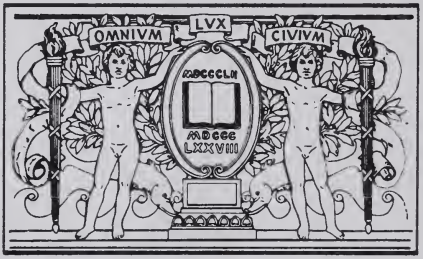
TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES OF LITTLE BARON TRUMP

AND HIS

WONDERFUL DOG BULGER

ILLUSTRATED BY

GEORGE WHARTON EDWARDS



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THE LITTLE BARON DISCHARGES HIS TUTORS. THEY LEAVE THE BARONIAL HALL IN HIGH DUDGEON.

TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES

OF

LITTLE BARON TRUMP

AND

HIS WONDERFUL DOG BULGER

BY

INGERSOLL LOCKWOOD

ILLUSTRATED BY

GEORGE WHARTON EDWARDS

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TO

Master EDWARD GOLD JOHNES

ONE OF

LITTLE BARON TRUMP'S

EARLIEST ADMIRERS

THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE.

Brief Account of the Little Baron's Famous Ancestor, the "Armless Knight," - - - - - - - 7

CHAPTER II.

Something about the Elder Baron, the Little Baron's Father—How the Elder Baron made the Ascent of the Mountains of the Moon—Wonderful Escape of the Elder Baron and Baroness from the Impenetrable Fog, - - - - - - - - - - - 12

CHAPTER III.

Birth of Bulger and the Little Baron in the Land of the Melodious Sneezers—How the Little Baron was Rescued from Death by His Faithful Bulger—The Elder Baron's Return to Europe—His Trouble with the Little Baron's Tutors, - - - - - - 19

CHAPTER IV.

How the Elder Baron and Baroness, the Household Servants, and the Horses and Cattle, of the Baronial Estates, all lost Flesh in consequence of the Elder Baron's Worrying about the Investment of the Little Baron's Fortune—How the Little Baron Solved the Problem—How the Elder Baron Objected to the Little Baron's setting out on His Travels—Steps taken by the Little Baron to Overcome this Opposition, - - - - - - - - - - - 30

CHAPTER V.

The Little Baron's First Voyage to Southern Seas, with a Brief Account of how He Triumphed over the Terrors of Port No Man's Port and Rescued his

PAGE.

Vessel from the Terrible Calm—His and Bulger's Wonderful Experience with that Strange Folk, the Wind Eaters—Their Attempt to Slay Him; and, Bulger's timely Arrival, - - - - - - - - - 39

CHAPTER VI.

The Elder Baron's Gift of a Copy of a Roman Newspaper—The Strange Story it contained—How the Little Baron, upon reading it, was moved to set sail in Search of the Sculptors' Isle—His Sojourn in the Land of the Slow Movers—Its Effect upon Little Baron—His narrow escape from becoming a Slow Mover Himself. - - - - - - - - - - 103

CHAPTER VII.

Journey of Bulger and the Little Baron to Central Asia—Benè-agâ, the Blind Guide—Their Passage through the Great Gloomy Forest and their Perilous Flight down the Rocky Steps of Bōga-Drappa—Adventures among the Umi-Lobas or Man Hoppers, in the Dominion of King Gâ-roo, - - - - - 136

CHAPTER VIII.

Visit of the Little Baron to Neptune's Caldron—How a Fearful Storm drove them on the Coast of China—His and Bulger's Adventures in the Kingdom of the Sun, including an account of Bulger's Arrest and Trial—Although defended by the Little Baron, he is sentenced to Death, - - - - - - - - 210

CHAPTER IX.

How the Little Baron again left Home contrary to Bulger's Advice—Some Account of the Awful Storm which cast them on the Island of Gô-gû-lâh—Adventures among the Roundbodies who inhabited it—Marriage of the Little Baron to Princess Rōlâ-Bōlâ Utterly Incredible Manner in which the Little Baron and Bulger made their Escape from the Domain of King Bô-gôô-gôô, - - - - - - - - 260

TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES

OF

LITTLE BARON TRUMP

AND

HIS WONDERFUL DOG BULGER.

CHAPTER I.

Short account of one of the little Baron's most celebrated ancestors, called "The Armless Knight." His wonderful strength and bravery. How he followed Cœur de Lion to the Orient. His brilliant exploits on the battle-field, under the walls of Joppa. His marriage in the presence of Saladin and Cœur de Lion.

SWORD STIRRUPS OF MY ANCESTOR, THE FAMOUS ARMLESS KNIGHT.

I come from one of the most ancient and honorable families of North Germany—famous for its valor and love of adventure.

One of my ancestors, when just entering the twenties heard at his father's table one morning, that England's great King Coeur de Lion was about to lead an army against the infidels.

"Gracious parent," cried the young man starting up from his seat, his eyes on fire, his cheeks ablaze, "May I join the Crusaders and aid in the destruction of the enemies of our holy religion?" "Alas, poor boy!" replied his father, casting a pitying glance at the youth, who, through some strange freak of nature had been born armless, "thou wert not intended for terrible conflicts such as await our cousin Coeur de Lion. Thou

lackest every means of weilding the battle sword, of couching the lance. 'Twould be murder to set thy defenceless body before the uplifted cimeter of the merciless Moslem! My dear son, banish such thoughts from thy mind and turn thee to poesy and philosophy, thou shalt add new lustre to our family name by thy learning." "Nay gracious parent, hear me!" urged the youth with eloquent eye: "true, nature has denied me arms, but she has not been so cruel as might be supposed for, as compensation, she has given a giant's strength to my lower limbs. Dost not remember how last month, I slew a wild boar with one blow from the heel of my hunting-boot?" "I do," answered the grim old Baron with a smile, "but—" "Pardon my interruption noble father" came from the young man, "I shall go into battle doubly armed, for to each stirrup shall I affiix a sword and woe betide the Mussulman who dares meet me on the battle-field."

"Go then my son!" cried the old Baron as the tears trickled down his battle-scarred cheeks, "go, join our royal cousin Coeur de Lion and if thou, armless, canst withstand the fury of the infidel, another glory will be added to the name of Trump, and in this ancestral hall shall hang a portrait of the 'Armless Knight,' upon which for all time the lovers of valiant deeds shall rest their wondering eyes."

The joy of my young ancestor knew no bounds.

Scarcely staying to make needful preparations for his journey, with a handful of trusty retainers, he rode from the castle yard amid the plaudits of thousands of fair women who had gathered from the neighboring city to wish God speed to the "Armless Knight."

'Twas not until the famous battle under the walls of Joppa that my ancestor had an opportunity to give an exhibition of his bravery, his extraordinary strength, and the resistless fury of his onslaughts.

Not one, not five, not ten common soldiers dared face the "Armless Knight."

Whole squadrons recoiled in terror before this mysterious avenger of the wrongs of Christendom, who, without hands,

struck down the Moslem warriors, as the grain falls before the blast.

Again and again, Saladin sent the flower of his men against the "Armless Knight," whose strength and valor had already made his name a terror to the superstitious soldiery. Little realizing the terrible fate awaiting him, the Moslem warrior would rush upon my ancestor with uplifted cimeter, when with one blow of his sword-armed stirrup the "Armless Knight" would cleave the breast of his foeman's horse, and then trample the infidel to death as he rolled upon the ground.

It was now high noon.

Upon an eminence, Saladin, watching the tide of battle, saw with anxious eye the appalling slaughter of the very flower of his army.

Already the name, rank, and nationality of my young ancestor had been made known to the Moslem leader.

"La, il la! Mahomed ul Becullah!" he cried, stroking his beard. "Blessed is the man who can call that Christian warrior his son! How many of the Prophet's children has he slain this day?"

"Six hundred and fifty-nine!" was the answer given.

"Six hundred and fifty-nine," echoed Saladin, "and it is but noonday!" When nightfall came the number had been increased to one thousand and seven.

Upon hearing of the terrible day's work of the "Armless Knight," Saladin's great heart bled, and yet he could not withhold his admiration for such wondrous skill and bravery.

"Go!" cried the magnanimous infidel Chieftain, "go, take from my household that beauteous slave Kohilât, her with orbs of lustrous black, the very blossom of grace and flower of queenly beauty. Lead her to the "Armless Knight," with royal greeting from Saladin; his valor makes him my brother, Giaour though he be! Away!"

When the beautiful Kohilât was led into the presence of my young ancestor, and the announcement made to him that Saladin had sent her as a present to him, the "Armless Knight," with royal greeting as a token of his respect for one so young, and yet so valiant, the first thought of the Christian youth was to wave her indignantly from his presence.

At that moment, however, Kohilât raised her large and lustrous eyes, and fixed them full upon the young man's face.

It was more than human heart could stand.

Motioning her retinue to leave his tent, he advanced to her side, with respectful mien, and said:

"Kohilât, a strange fate has sent thee to me. The messenger of the great Saladin imparts to me knowledge of thy goodness, thy amiability, and thy gifted mind, which holds within its store most delightful imagery and useful knowledge as well. He informs me that thou standest in the direct line of descent from that famed princess of your land, Scheherezada, who for a thousand and one nights held the thoughts of the Sultan of the Indies so enthralled by the play of her brilliant fancy, as to turn him aside from his terrible project of vengeance. Dost think, Kohilât, that thou canst forget thy false god and love only the true one?"

"Ay, my lord," murmured the gentle Kohilât, "if such be my lord's pleasure."

A smile spread over the handsome face of my young ancestor. He would fain have met with more resistance in converting the fair infidel to the true faith, but though he searched that beautiful face long and closely for any sign of subtility, yet saw he none.

"'Tis well, Kohilât." he continued, "and now answer me, and speak from thy heart. Art thou willing to become my wife, according to the rites of the Christian church and the laws of my native land?"

Again the beautiful Kohilât replied:

"Ay, my lord; if such be thy pleasure."

The following day a truce was proclaimed, and in the presence of the two great leaders of the opposing armies, Coeur de Lion and Saladin, both surrounded by the most glorious retinue, my young ancestor and the princess Kohilât were joined together as man and wife by the royal confessor, the "Armless Knight" towering above the surrounding multitude in his glittering coat of mail like a column of burnished silver. When he advanced to meet his dark-eyed bride, with the marriage ring

held between his lips, a mighty shout went up from both armies.

Saladin stroked his beard. Coeur de Lion made the sign of the cross. In a short half hour the leaders had returned to their camps, and war had resumed its awful work of destruction.

To this union of my renowned ancestor, the "Armless Knight," with the Moslem maid, I attribute my possession of an almost Oriental exuberance of fancy.

PORTRAIT OF MY FAMOUS ANCESTOR, THE "ARMLESS KNIGHT," WITH HIS MARRIAGE RING BETWEEN HIS LIPS.

CHAPTER II.

The elder Baron uncertain as to the exact locality of my birth. Reasons why will be given later. My parents traveling in Africa at this time. The elder Baron's remarkable ascent of the Mountains of the Moon. Miraculous escape from the impenetrable fog. How accomplished. In the land of the Melodious Sneezers. All that happened there. How the King of the Melodious Sneezers conducted my parents in great honor to his palace, and how they were treated by him.

THE MUZZLED MULES.

While it lies within my power to gratify the curiosity of my readers as to what part of the world it was in which I first saw darkness—for I was born in the night—yet, as to the nature of the immediate spot on which I was born, unfortunately I am able to do more than repeat my father's words when questioned as to this point.

"My son, if I were on my death-bed I could only say that thou wert either born in the centre in a great lake, on an island, upon a peninsular or on the top of a very high mountain, as I have often explained to thee."

Let it suffice, then, gentle reader, for the present, for me to inform you that at the time of my birth, my parents were traveling in Africa; that my father had just successfully accomplished one of the most wonderful feats in mountain climbing, namely, the ascent of the loftiest peak of the Mountains of the Moon; that his guides had abandoned him upon his reaching a particularly dangerous spot in the ascent; but that he had pushed forward without them, and reached the summit after several days of terrible privation, suffering both hunger

and thirst,—it being a peculiarity of the atmosphere after passing a certain height that the muscles of the face and throat became paralyzed and the unfortunate traveler either perishes from hunger or thirst while in the very presence of delicious fruit and cool, limpid water.

Upon rejoining my mother, who had accompanied him as far up the mountain side as the best-trained and most sure-footed mules could find a foot-hold, they proceeded to make their way, as they supposed, to the valley from which they had first set out.

An inpenetrable fog now shut them in and they soon found themselves hopelessly and helplessly wandering about.

On the morning of the third day the fog had even increased in thickness, closing around them like a pall, almost shutting out the light of day.

While groping about my father had come into contact with the two beasts of burden which had served him in the easier parts of the ascent. They were quietly and unconcernedly browsing upon the sweet and tender shrubs which grew on the mountain side.

Suddenly an idea came to my father. It was born of that desperation which makes a man think long and hard before lying down to die.

It was thus he reasoned: If these animals are permitted to eat their fill whenever their appetites demand, they will be quite willing to stay where they are, especially when they find themselves surrounded by such excellent pastures, and, in addition thereto, quite relieved from all toil. Let them, however, feel the pangs of hunger, or better yet, starvation's tooth at their vitals and their thoughts will at once revert to their homes, their masters, their feeding-troughs and they will lose no time in setting out for the village where they belong. With the energy of despair, my father hurriedly bound a piece of canvass over their mouths so that they could neither graze nor drink and awaited the results of his experiment, with bated breath, for the tears and groans of my poor mother, whose strength was fast ebbing away, smote him to the very soul.

After a few hours the animals rose to their feet and became very restive, and in another hour their hunger had so increased that they were making frantic efforts to feed, as my father could easily tell from the jerking of the line which he had been careful to attach to their headstalls.

After the fourth hour there was a long silence, during which the animals seemed to be deliberating as to what course they should pursue.

The fifth hour came.

My mother had sunk to rest, weak and weary, in my father's arms. Suddenly there was a tightening of the guiding lines. Gently my father aroused his sleeping mate, whispering a few words of comfort.

Again the lines tightened.

My parents were now on their feet, peering into the depths of the impenetrable fog which shrouded them about and made them even invisible to each other.

Hist! the animals move again! with a sudden impulse, as if their minds had at last solved the problem which had been bewildering them for several hours, the beasts, with violent snortings turned from the spot, pushing through the shrubbery and causing my parents to face quite about.

Evidently there was a complete accord between the conclusions reached by their intelligence or instinct, for not once did they pull apart or come to a halt, except when restrained by my father. And thus my dear parents were saved! All that day and part of the next did they pursue their dreary way. The fog at last lifted, and it was at once apparent to my father that, although the animals were guiding them towards human habitations, yet it was not the land he had quitted upon starting out upon the journey to the mountain peak. The path now became so plainly visible that my father removed the improvised muzzles from the two animals and allowed them to satisfy their hunger, which they proceeded to do with the keenest relish. So worn out was my mother that she sank helpless to the ground. Refreshing her with a draught of spring-water and the juice of some wild grapes, my father

hastily prepared a bed of soft foliage, upon which they were both glad to throw themselves after their long and weary tramp.

They had soon fallen into a deep and most delightful sleep. How long they lay on their leafy bed, wrapt in their refreshing slumber, they knew not.

It certainly was for many a long hour; for when they awoke, hunger was gnawing at their stomachs. Fain would they have at once proceeded to gather fruit, had not their ears been suddenly saluted with most extraordinary noises. They rubbed their eyes and looked about and at each other, deeming themselves the sport of some merry jack-a-dreamer.

But, no; they were wide awake and in full possession of their senses. Again the strange sounds are heard and this time they are nearer and clearer.

There is a rise and a fall, a swelling out and then a dying away.

The sounds are jerky and snappy like and there is a singular music in them.

Nearer and still nearer they come. Louder and still louder they grow. "Wild beasts?" whispered my mother half inquiringly.

"Nay!" falls from my father's lips. "Not unless human beings may be so wild as to merit the name of beasts."

"Hark again!" murmured my mother.

There was no mistaking the sounds any longer, for, like a chorus of many voices, shrill and piping, deep and grumbling, soft and musical, harsh and gutteral, yet all in a sort of rude and wild harmony, mingling in one mighty strain, now low and scarcely audible and now breaking out with a fierce and seemingly threatening vigor, the singers, chanters, howlers or what they might be, rushed into the valley below us in a wild and yet half regulated disorder.

They were human beings in savage garb, with painted faces and clubs swung lightly across their shoulders. Whether pausing or advancing they still kept up their wild and mysterious chant, choppy, jerky and snappy for all the world like a thousand people who had just drawn plentifully from a thousand snuff boxes.

"Save me, husband!" cried my mother with pallid face. "We shall be put to some awful torture by these wild children of the forest." A smile so gentle, and yet so calm, that it could not fail to be reassuring spread over my father's features.

"Never fear!" said he, "I know them, I've been seeking them! What has been denied many a traveler stronger and bolder than I, has been accorded to a member of the Trump family in the most miraculous manner. When we return to Europe every Monarch, every learned society, will hasten to bind a medal on my breast, for, dear wife, your husband is the first white man to enter the land of the—"

"The—?" echoed my mother leaning forward and grasping her husband's arm.

"Melodious Sneezers!"

"Melodious Sneezers?" repeated my mother with wide-opened eye, and amusement seated in every feature.

"Melo—"

"But she could get no further. To my father's infinite amusement, she fell a-sneezing most violently. In such rapid succession did the sneezes flow that it sounded exactly like a diminutive engine under full headway.

At last the fit seemed to have passed. "Melo—" but in vain; she could not reach the second syllable.

And now, in his turn, my father started off, slow at first but going faster and faster.

Strange to say their sneezing soon began to catch the ways of the country and blended thoroughly, keeping time in spite of their efforts to check it.

"Know then, dear wife," cried my father pantingly when his fit was over, "that those strange people stretched on the greensward below are the "Melodious Sneezers;" that they are not only perfectly harmless, but gentle, kind and peaceable to an astonishing degree. Fear them not! Their clubs are only for game." "But why—?" asked my mother warily lest another fit should take her.

"I understand thee," was the reply. "Listen. Know, that in this valley and in the greater ones below, the air is always

filled with myriads upon myriads of insects of infinitessimal size; only the strongest microscope can give proof to your sight of their actual existence. For countless generations, these peaceable barbarians here have been subjected to the tickling sensations which you and I have—"

Again my poor parent fell a-sneezing in regular and musical cadences, up and down, deep and shrill, now fast and faster, now slow and slower until silence reigned again.

"Just experienced," resumed my father, "until it has rendered the effort of sneezing quite as easy as breathing, and taking advantage of results which they soon discerned could not be avoided, these children of nature were not slow to lay aside their usual speech and literally talk by sneezes!"

"With them, a sneeze is capable of so many intonations, so many inflections, that they find no difficulty in expressing all the necessary feelings and sensations,—at least necessary for them in their simple lives, as you shall see later on."

Fain would my poor mother here express her passing wonder but she dare not open her mouth. "Come, dearest mate," cried my father gayly. "Courage! Let us descend into this beautiful valley, for as yet we are only standing upon the borders of the "Land of the Melodious Sneezers" called in their soft and musical tongue Lâ-aah-chew-lâ."

The pronunciation of this word again threw my poor parents into a perfect whirlwind of sneezes; but nothing daunted, they advanced to meet the natives, who at first sight fell prostrate on their faces and for several moments kept up a low plaintive hum of sneezes, with their noses thrust into the grass.

By degrees however, my father succeeding in convincing them that he was quite as peaceably inclined as they were.

Whereupon the Melodious Sneezers performed a most singular and withal pleasing dance of joy, their feet keeping perfect time with their chorus of sneezing.

As my father afterwards learned, the dance was to express their intense gratitude to the "white spirits" for not having eaten them alive.

The march homeward was now entered upon, my father

walking hand in hand with the King Chew-chew-lô, and my mother escorted by a score or more of his wives, the favorite of the royal house being named Chew-lâ-â-â-â-â and each successive one according as she occupied a less lofty place in the King's affections having a shorter name until at last Chew-lâ signified little better than a mere serving maid.

My father found that the villages of the Melodious Sneezers, on account of the frequency and the violence of inundations from the network of rivers which completely shut in their land, consisted of houses or habitations built in the trees or upon lofty piles.

He and my mother were lodged in one of the most commodious of the royal dwellings and so many slaves and attendants were assigned to care for their wants that there was little or no room to move about.

To their great sorrow, my father proceeded to dismiss several hundred in order that he might get close enough to my mother to converse without holloaing and then sent word to King Chew-chew-lô that both he and my mother would need at least a week of perfect rest and quiet to regain their health and strength after their terrible sufferings on the slopes of the Mountains of the Moon.

CHAPTER III.

My birth. The elder Baron reads my horoscope. Birth of Bulger. The elder Baron puts on mud-shoes and goes out for a walk. What he discovers. My wonderful precocity. My love for Bulger. My terrible fall into the lake of mud. How the Melodious Sneezers in their mud-shoes attempted to rescue me. Their failure. Bulger comes to their assistance. How I was dug out and restored to my mother. Remarkable effect of the warm mud on my head and brain. The Melodious Sneezers are afraid of me. My fondness for arithmetic and languages. Our farewell to the Melodious Sneezers, and return home. How I discharged my tutors, and how the elder Baron forced them to pay for the instruction I had given them.

BULGER
WITH HIS MUD SHOES ON.

At this point my hand trembles and the ink flows unsteadily from my pen.

I am about to record certain events which, I feel assured the reader will agree with me in considering to be the most interesting of my strange and varied life. Possibly I should say interesting to me; for, gentle reader, one of these "certain events" above referred to is a no less important occurence than my birth into this grand and beautiful world—a world which has proven to be full of wonderful things and of more wonderful beings, as you shall see as I go on with my story.

I was born in midsummer. It was the night season.

Ten thousand stars twinkled over the cradle of that wretched, little, helpless, lump of clay; but brighter than all, like a crimson torch flaming in the skies, Sirius, the dog star, shone down upon me!

My father looked up at the heavens and smiling, murmured: "Little stranger, thou shalt ever be a lover of dogs. Thy smile shall be joy to them, thy words music and in some four-footed beast of their race shalt thou find thy best, thy faithfulest, thy truest friend."

As if to set the very stamp of truth upon my father's words at that very instant a cry of a mother dog was heard in an adjoining room and one of the Royal household Chew-lâ-â, came running into my presence with a basket of tiny puppies. My father laughingly seized the wicker cradle of this newly arrived family and holding it up to me, cried out:

"Choose, little baron, choose thee a friend and companion." I put out my tiny baby hand and it rested upon one with a particularly large head. "Ha! ha!" laughed my father, "thou hast well chosen, little baron, for him thou hast chosen hath so much brain that his head doth fairly bulge with it."

And when my infant tongue came to wrestle with that word, it was twisted into "Bulger." And thus it was that Bulger and I started out on life's journey at almost the same moment! Upon the following day my father made discovery that the waters had begun to recede in the night, and as he looked down from our lofty dwelling, he saw that it now stood apparently in the centre of quite an extensive island. After breakfast, in accordance with the custom of the country, my father put on a pair of King Chew-chew-lô's wooden shoes which were worn by all of the Melodious Sneezers when attempting to move about on the surface of the soft mud occasioned by the inundation.

These wooden shoes are extremely light although quite as long and as broad as snow shoes. The soles being polished, the wearer is enabled to glide over the mud which, from the nature of the soil is very oily, with the same rapidity as a runner upon snow shoes.

After an excursion of several hours up hill and down dale my father returned with this piece of strange intelligence, namely, that their habitation had undoubtedly, prior to the falling of the waters been situated in a lake; but that by degrees, as

the waters had receded, an island had been formed, which somewhat later had been transformed into a peninsula, which in its turn by a still further sinking of the waters, had been changed into the crown of a mountain with gently sloping sides so that, as he reported to my mother, to his dying day it would be impossible for him to say whether his son had been born in a lake, on an island, upon a peninsula or on a mountain top, a fact which pained him extremely, for, like all the members of his family, he took the greatest pride in recording important events with scrupulous exactitude, even to the smallest detail.

Unlike most babes, who seem content to pass the first half year or so of their lives eating, sleeping and crying, I from the very outset displayed a most astonishing precocity.

When only a few weeks old, although I could not talk, yet I had learned to whistle for Bulger, whose development in mind and body seemed to keep even pace with mine and who passed most of his time looking up into my childish face with an expression which meant only too plainly:

"Oh, I shall be so glad when that little tongue is unloosed so that you may call me Bulger and bid me do your will."

Nor had he long to wait.

The one thing, which, at this early period of my life gave me most joy, was the sunlight.

Within doors, I was fretful, peevish, irritable, but once out in the open air, my whole nature changed. I drank in the soft, balmy atmosphere with a vigor and a satisfaction that delighted my father. My face brightened, my eyes traveled from valley to hill, from mountain-top to sky.

Into such an ecstacy of pleasure did this sight of the great world throw me, that my mother became anxious lest it presaged some great evil that was to happen unto me.

But the stately Baron only smiled. "Fear nothing, wife, it only means that within that little head dwells a most wonderfully active mind for a child of its months."

Whenever Bulger heard his little master crying out in joyful tones at sight of the beautiful world, he was sure to be

seized with a fit of violent barking, during which he sprang around about me with the wildest and most extravagant manifestations of sympathy.

Without a doubt, there was a wonderful bond of affection between us.

To my mother's —I had almost said horror, I, one day while she was walking with me in her arms, upon the broad veranda, which encircled Chew-chew-lô's palaces, attempted to throw myself from her arms, crying out in German: Los! Los! (Let me go! Let me go!) I was but two months old and the loud and vigorous tone in which I pronounced this first word which I had spoken in my mother's tongue fairly startled her.

I had, up to that time, apparently been more interested in the soft and musical language of my royal nurse, Chew-lâ, in which I could make myself understood very easily. About this time an accident happened to me which, although it did not bring about, it greatly hastened the release from parently restraint, so ardently desired, both by Bulger and by me, for from my very entrance into this world something told me that I should be a famous child, not a mere, precocious youth who is made use of by his parents at social gatherings to bore people already in poor spirits, by mounting upon chair or table and declaiming verses, parrot-like, with half a dozen woodeny, jerky gestures; but a genuine hero, a real traveler, not afraid to brave a tempest, face a wild beast or bully a barbarous people into doing as he wanted them to do.

It was my mother's custom in the cool of the day to sit with me on the broad veranda while she darned my father's stockings; for, although of gentle birth, she had been so accustomed when a girl to exericse German thrift in all things that now, even though she had become the wife of a real baron, she could not forego the pleasure of doing things in those good old ways.

And thus she saved my father many a pfennig which the good man bestowed upon the worthy poor and went down to the grave loaded with their blessings.

At such a time it was that a sudden fit of sneezing seized my mother and to her unspeakable horror she let me slip from her

arms. Down, down I fell, striking in the soft mud and disappearing from sight.

The poor woman dropped to the floor like lead.

The stately baron rose to his feet and the color fled from his manly cheek.

But Chew-chew-lô, who fortunately was paying a visit to my father, only smiled.

"Unfeeling barbarian!" roared the great baron, "hast no respect for a father's tears, a mother's anguish? Out upon thee! Would to heaven I had never entered thy domain!" Chew-chew-lô spake not a work. Turning with imperious mien and right royal manner towards a crowd of retainers, he waved his hand.

Quicker than thought the band of Melodious Sneezers sprang to their wooden shoes.

Away, away, they darted like black bats on the wing.

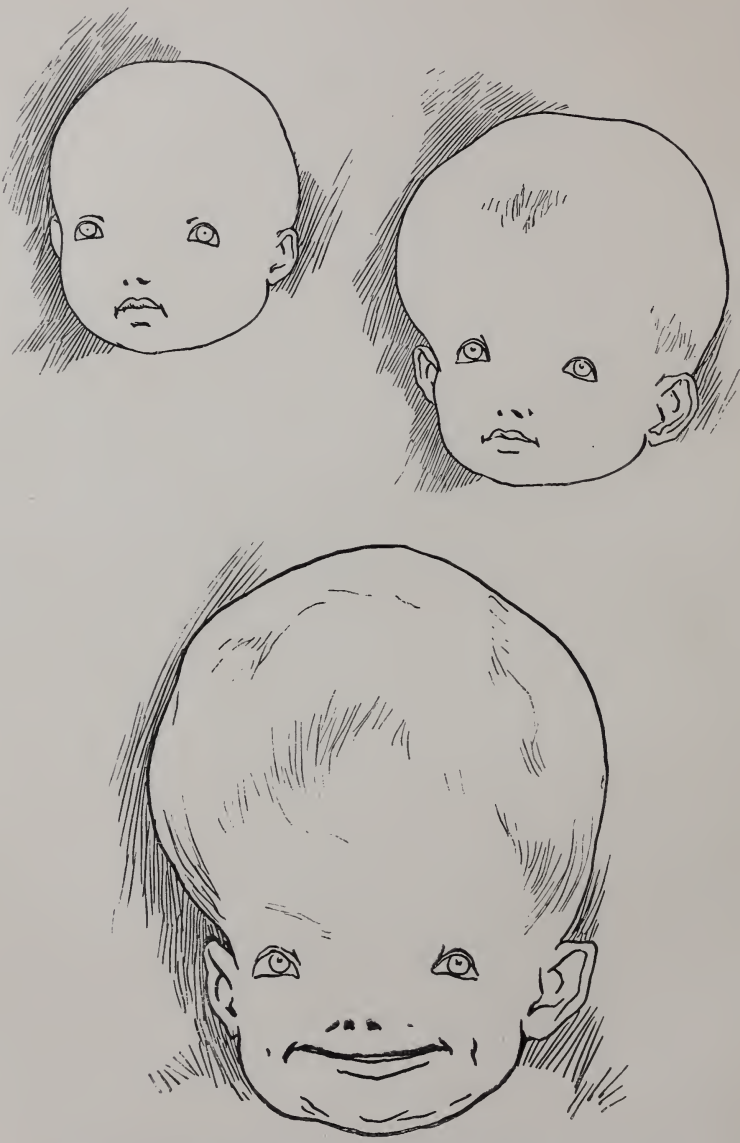
The baron saw that in his terrible grief he had let his better judgment slip away, and with pallid face and bended head stood supporting the fainting form of his wife.

He felt, he knew, that his presence among the Melodious Sneezers at this moment would only disconcert them, impede their progress, and possibly so confuse them that all their efforts might be in vain. They, from their childhood, were so accustomed to wear those huge wooden shoes, to move about on the surface of this treacherous mud, that if it were possible for human hands to restore his son to his arms, theirs would do it.

And so he spoke a few words of encouragement in my mother's ear, and continued to stand like a statue, with his gaze riveted upon the long files of Melodious Sneezers, as they wound around the crest of the mountain to gain the spot where, as they judged, I had disappeared.

Armed with their light, broad, wooden shovels, their dusky arms rose and fell with wonderful precision and regularity, keeping time with the musical notes of their sneezing; now soft and low, now breaking out into a wild and galloping measure.

Down! Down! Down!



THREE PORTRAITS SHOWING THE WONDERFUL GROWTH OF MY BRAIN.

And yet they delved in vain!

No sign of me was there to gladden the hearts of my poor, grief-stricken parents.

But hark!

What is that shrill cry?

It is not human!

No; for it is Bulger's bark, or rather it is Bulger's yelp.

He had been watching the band of Melodious Sneezers, as their white shovels rose and fell all in vain, with his head thrust through the railings of the veranda.

No one was there with mind and heart enough to catch the meaning of that poor yelp.

Chew-chew-lô saw that his men were standing, leaning on their shovels, with looks of doubt and hesitation in their eyes.

The King was silent.

It was the great baron who spoke:

"Oh, let them not give o'er! My life, my wealth, my all, are thine, good, kind Chew-Chew——"

A fit of sneezing cut short his appeal.

Again Bulger's cry was raised, and this time the King heeded it.

An attendant saw the royal nod, and hastening to bind broad wooden cups upon the dog's feet, he was turned loose upon the surface of the mud.

What is man, with his boasted intelligence?

They were ten paces or more distant from the point where I had disappeared.

Yelping, barking, and whining by turns, my dear Bulger hurried to the spot where his unerring scent told him that his beloved little master had gone down.

Again the band of Melodious Sneezers set to work with renewed vigor, their white shovels flashing with strange effect against the inky blackness of the mud.

Bulger encouraged them with loud and joyful barkings.

Suddenly a clear, ringing, melodious "chew" rent the air.

They had caught sight of me!

With rare foresight for one of my months, I had closed my

nostrils with one hand before reaching the mud, and had thus saved my lungs from filling up.

But how useless would have been this precaution, had not my faithful Bulger come to my rescue!

His joy now knew no bounds.

I thought that I caught a glimpse of a smile on the old baron's tear-stained cheek, as his boy was borne to the veranda, more like an animated lump of earth than aught else, for the air had revived me. My eyes were not only wide open, but they were the only clean place on my whole body.

Utterly regardless of my filthy condition, my fond mother clasped me convulsively to her breast, and I verily believe that she would have pressed her lips upon my mud-covered head and face, had she not seen the baron's broad palm held in suspicious proximity, while her mother's heart was emptying itself out in words. A few basins of warm water, and I was myself again.

No, I was never myself again. My bath in the warm mud of Lâ-aah-chew-lâ effected a most remarkable change in me; it checked the growth of my body and turned all my strength upwards into my head and brain.

In one short month my head almost doubled in size.

My baby face and expression were gone!

And ere another moon had filled her horns I had grown to be a living wonder!

Not only was the size of my head something remarkable, but from my eyes beamed an astonishing intelligence.

The poor women of Lâ-aah-chew-lâ Land crouched in front of me as if I were a being from another world and then tapping their foreheads they approached my mother and whispered:

"Most gracious Chew-lâ-â-â-â-â-â the Great Spirit has made a mistake and put two souls in there instead of one!"

And then they bent their graceful bodies till their foreheads touched my mother's feet and withdrew, going out backwards like the best regulated court ladies, each leveling her finger at me and opening wide her eyes as she disappeared through the door.

The whole scene was so grotesque that I burst out into a shout of laughter.

Upon hearing which, the poor creatures tumbled headlong over each other in their mad efforts to get outside of the house, shrieking at the top of their voices:

"Save us! save us! He will bewitch us!"

"Little Baron!" said my father in a tone of mock anger, "you should not have frightened the ladies of King Chew-chew-lô's Court!"

Chew-pâ! Chew-pâ! (Idiots! Idiots!) I replied, looking up from my slate upon which I was working out an example in arithmetic, for I was very fond of figures.

In fact, my father had already taught me addition by showing me how to trade off worthless glass beads for valuable ivory, and division, by taking away ninety cents from every dollar I made. Long before I could read or write, I knew the letters of several languages by name, and could spell any word which had no silent letter in it. No one took more delight in my wonderful accomplishments than Bulger.

He seemed to know instinctively that his little master was no ordinary being and respected him accordingly. We now bade adieu to the Land of Lâ-aah-chew-lâ and the Melodious Sneezers.

King Chew-chew-lô with a mighty band of retainers accompanied us to his frontier, making the forests resound with their melodious chew-chew-a-ing. Standing on the old baron's shoulders, I waved them a last goodbye to which they answered with such a perfect whirlwind of Chew-chew-â's that Bulger fairly howled with delight.

Any special honor paid to his master was always a personal matter to him. The elder baron had intended to penetrate still further into the heart of Africa; but the fact is, that the continual growth of my mind was so wonderful that it engrossed his attention from morn till night. He endeavored to hide this from me; but all to no purpose.

Before I was two years old my brain had grown so heavy that my mother was obliged to sew pieces of lead in the soles

of my shoes to keep me right end upwards, and yet, in spite of this precaution, I was often found standing upon my head working out difficult mathematical problems by making use of my toes, as the Chinese do their counting machines.

The first thing which my father did upon reaching home was to take me to a phrenologist in order to have a chart made of my head.

The examination lasted a month.

At length, upon the completion of the chart, it was found that I possessed thirty-two distinct bumps.

Well-developed ones, too!

It was, therefore, at once determined to engage thiry-two learned tutors, each tutor to have charge of a separate bump and to do his utmost to enlarge it even if it grew to be a horn.

My father was resolved to leave nothing undone in order to develop my mental powers to the utmost limit. I said nothing either for or against the scheme.

In one short year I had learned all that the thirty-two tutors could teach me, and, what is more, I had taught each one of them fifty things which he had not known before, and which I had learned while traveling in foreign lands with my parents.

One fine morning to the great surprise of my thirty-two tutors I discharged the whole of them.

The elder baron at my suggestion now sent a bill to each tutor for services rendered him by me.

Each tutor refused to pay.

The elder baron, at my suggestion, now caused legal process to be served upon each one of them.

The court upon hearing my testimony rendered an opinion which covered five thousand pages of legal cap paper and required a whole week to read, in which they held that each thing which I had taught to each one of my thirty-two tutors was so remarkably strange and peculiar that in the eye of the law it was worth at least one hundred dollars. That made the bill of each tutor amount to five thousand dollars, or one hundred and sixty thousand dollars in all.

The court then adjourned for a year, all three judges being so worn out mentally and physically as to need a twelve months' rest before taking up any other business.

THE THREE WEARY JUDGES AS THEY APPEARED AT THE CLOSE OF MY SUIT AGAINST MY TUTORS.

CHAPTER IV.

How the elder Baron lost flesh worrying about the investment of my money. Effect of his anxiety on the rest of the household. I take the matter in hand and devise ways to increase my fortune. I become extremely wealthy. When eight years of age I am seized with an uncontrolable desire to visit faraway lands, and begin to pack up. The elder Baron objects. How I set to work to get his consent. Wild doings of my playfellows. How we stormed the castle, broke up the hawking, ruined the fox hunt, summoned the ten doctors, and set fire to the neighboring fields. The elder Baron grows weary of my doings and consents to let me go. My delight and Bulger's joy.

THE ELDER BARON AND BARONESS GREW VERY THIN.

The question which now occupied my father's mind to the exclusion of all other thoughts was how to invest this large sum of money, so that upon my attaining my twenty-first year I would be provided with a sufficiently large income to live as a baron should—particularly when he belonged to so famous a family as ours.

The fact of the matter is, my father permitted this question to prey upon his peace of mind to such an extent that he lost flesh perceptibly.

My mother, too, seeing his lamentable condition began to fret and worry to such a degree, that she likewise became greatly emaciated. With their loss of flesh naturally their appetites dwindled and little or no food was provided; or, anyway, no more than was just sufficient to satisfy Bulger's and my wants.

Whereupon the servants began to lose flesh, both the indoor and outdoor ones; and in their desperate attempt to keep body and soul together, the horses and cattle were fed upon short rations, and the consequence was, they, too, soon began to fall away.

So it grew to be quite a serious sight to see my poor father and mother reduced to mere skin and bones, driven about the country by mere shadows for coachman and footman, and drawn by four horses whose bones fairly rattled under their skins when they were coaxed or beaten into a lazy trot.

Bulger and I alone retained our plumpness and good spirits. At length I determined to interfere and put a speedy end to

OUR FAMILY COACHMAN BECOMES NOTHING BUT SKIN AND BONE.

this deplorable state of affairs. I exacted from the elder baron a solemn promise that he would follow my directions to the letter and not raise any objections, no matter how wild or unreasonable they might appear to him, or to my mother.

Then bidding him to partake of some good, succulent food, retire early and get a nice long sleep, I saluted him respectfully and said:

"Baron, until to-morrow morning!"

I had scarcely finished my breakfast when my door opened and the elder baron walked into the room.

He looked much refreshed. The color had returned to his cheek, the gleam to his eye.

He was already a different man.

"Here, gracious Sir," I began, handing him a parchment roll, "is a list of all the best known almanac makers in our land. Have interviews with them at once and purchase from them the right to furnish weather prognostications for the coming year!"

The elder baron began to expostulate. "Baron!" I remarked sternly, raising my hand, "a true Knight has but one word to give!"

He was silent and motioned me to continue.

I did so as follows:

"Respected parent, when you have secured this right from each of them, return to me."

In a few days my father had accomplished his mission.

He entered my room and put into my hands the needful concessions from every noted almanac maker in the land.

Again I bade him refresh himself thoroughly, get a good night's rest and see me in the morning.

As Bulger and I were returning from breakfast the elder baron presented himself at the door of my apartments.

He looked strong and well. His face had filled out again and his step had recovered its old-time elasticity.

Again I placed a roll of parchment in his hands, and said to him:

"Scatter the contents of that parchment evenly and plentifully throughout each almanac, on the pages devoted to the months of November, December, January, and February."

He looked at me inquiringly, and his lips began to move.

"Noble Sir!" said I, ere a sound had issued from his month, "in our family, knights have always been without fear and without reproach." He bent his lofty form in silence and withdrew.

Possibly the reader may have a little curiosity to know the contents of the parchment roll which I placed in the hands of the elder baron on this occasion.

If brevity be the soul of wit, it was witty. If a fair round hand be the garb of truth, it was truthful. Be this as it may choose to be, the words which my pen had traced on that parchment roll, read as follows:

"All signs point to an extremely cold Winter." "Indications are that the coming Winter will be the severest for half a century." "Forecasts all give the same answer—a Winter of exceptional length and bitter coldness." "Most skilled prognosticators agree in predicting a degree of low temperature rarely reached in these latitudes." "About this time expect unusual cold." "Protect plants." "Now look well to your winter vegetables." "Secure them from the extreme frost." "Double your supply of winter fuel." "Now look for fierce snowstorms." "Expect bitter cold weather during all this month." "Prepare for most unusual hail storms." "Be on your guard for sudden and penetrating north winds." "House cattle warmly for all this month." "Beware of deadly blizzards, they will come with a furious onset."

After a few days' absence, my father returned to the manor house. His arrival was duly announced to me by Bulger, to whom I said: "Go, good Bulger, and conduct the Baron to my apartment."

Away he bounded with many a sportive leap and bark, and soon returned, ushered in the elder baron with the joyous manner so common to him when active in serving me.

"I have obeyed thee, my son!" murmured the elder baron with a stately arc in his bending form.

"'Tis well!" I replied, motioning him to be seated.

"And now honored guide of my childhood's uncertain feet, give heed to my words: Our task is almost done. In a few days the investment of this money, which has occasioned thee so much anxiety, fairly robbing thee of thy heart's service, will be complete; ay, complete; and, what is better still, so fortunately invested that thou shalt be enabled to call thyself the father of one of the richest children in the Kingdom."

"Hearken, Baron. Go now into the leading markets of the land and put every fur merchant under written contract to deliver unto thee in early Autumn all the pelts, dressed, undressed, or on the backs of the owners, of which they will guarantee the delivery under their hands and seals."

The words had scarcely fallen from my lips ere the elder baron had risen from his chair and caught me warmly to his breast.

"My son!" he cried as he stroked my protuberant brow, it is a master stroke! It is worthy of a governor of a province! I long to begin the good work. Permit me to set out this very night!" "Wait baron!" said I, leading him to his chair and gently constraining him to be seated. "Wait, Baron; there is somewhat yet to be said. When thou hast completed the purchase of all the pelts, which are expected to enter the Kingdom this year, expend the rest of the money in purchasing all the wood, coal and peat thou canst find, not that I would draw profit from the poor man's slender store; but simply to keep others from wronging him by combining against him, as they would surely do upon the first publication of the weather predictions" "Ah, little Baron!" exclaimed my father, "how thoughtful; for, as thou sayest, we must not lay a burden on the poor man's shoulders!"

Such was the diligence with which my father carried my plans to completion, that in a single month I had bought and sold again the entire product of the fur market, at a small advance, it is true, but large enough to make me an extremely rich man.

It was so gently and skillfully done, that no one ever suspected the clever ruse by which I was enabled to acquire riches enough to set out upon my travels just as my inclination might prompt, and to know that were I to be captured and held for ransom by the most grasping freebooters, my bankers would have gold enough to ransom me.

Upon the completion of my eighth year I was seized with an uncontrolable desire to enter at once upon the fulfillment of my long cherished plans, to visit faraway lands inhab-

ited by strange and curious people. My own home, my own language, my own people, wearied me and wore upon me.

In my sleep I paced the deck of staunch vessels, shouted my orders, crowding sail in calm and reefing in threatening weather. I passed my time from morn till night, packing cases with suitable articles for traffic with the savages, so that I might be able to penetrate into interiors never visited by civilized man, and ascend rivers closed since the world began to the white-winged messengers of trade and commerce. But, strange to say, my father urged thereto, possibly, by the entreaties of my mother, firmly and resolutely set his face against my project of leaving home.

I was beside myself with disappointment. I entreated, I implored, I threatened. For the first time in my life—it pains me even now to make the confession—I was guilty of a certain disrespect to the authors of my being.

Bulger, after studying the situation for several days, reached the conclusion that the elder baron was in some way the cause of my unhappiness, and it required, at times, my sternest command to restrain him from setting his teeth in the calves of the elder baron's legs as he quitted my apartment after some stormy interview.

"What!" cried I, in tones tremulous with grief, "am I doomed to waste the splendid gifts with which nature has endowed me, shut within the walls of this petty town, whose most boisterous scenes are the brawls of its market places, whose people never witness a grander pageant than the passing of a royal troop of horse? It must not, it shall not be. Thou hast said, thyself, that I am no ordinary child to be amused with ball and top, and entertained with picture books."

But the elder baron had hardened his heart, and all my pleading was to no purpose.

And yet I did not despair of gaining my point in the end.

The continual dropping of water finally wore away the rock. I made up my mind now to move the elder baron to acquiesce in my project of leaving home by resorting to entirely different tactics. Said I to myself:

"He wishes me to be a child; I'll be one! And forthwith I set about making friends with every mischievous little rogue in the town.

Not a single juvenile ne'er-do-well escaped my attentions. The more rampant, active, and tireless his power of mischief, the closer I wrapped him in my affections.

From gray dawn to dewy eve these chums and boon companions of mine flocked about the castle. They worshipped me as their leader and yielded an implicit obedience to my commands as were I possessed of some mastery over them.

The elder baron saw the gathering cloud and bent his head as if to meet the coming storm with better chance of resisting it.

Came there a dinner party, the choicest Burgundy was found to have been spirited away and the bottles filled with common claret. Did the elder baron meet his friends in the fields for a trial with the hawks, it was only to discover that they had been so overfed as to sit stupidly placid when the hood was removed. Let the cook be told that guests were expected, and that he must be careful to have the little dumplings of his soup extra delicate, to the elder baron's horror, a cherry stone would be found in the centre of each little dumpling.

One of my coadjutors was venturesome enough to pilfer the elder baron's snuff box and fill it with pepper. The result may be imagined, Another took good care to pour water into all the tinder boxes before the guests called for their pipes. Upon attempting to rise from the table, here and there a queue would be found securely tied to the back of the chair.

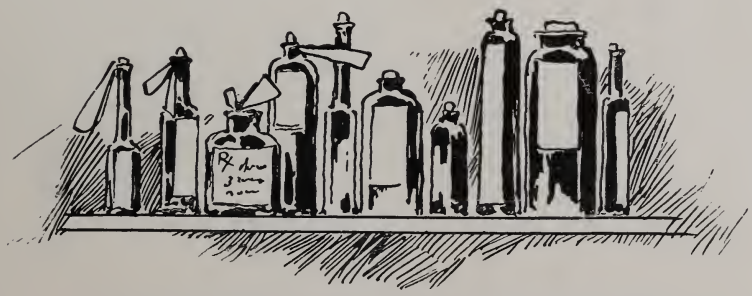
One of my favorite exploits was to station myself on the first landing of the stairway and "hold the bridge like Horatius Cocles of old," my wild band of two dozen young barbarians rushing madly up the staircase with screams, yells and vociferations which would have done credit to any horde of real savages I have ever visited, while I, with my wooden sabre, beat down their sticks, occasionally rapping too bold a youngster on the knuckles and sending him bawling to the foot of the stairway, to Bulger's infinite amusement, as he always insisted upon taking part in the fray and gloried in my prowess.

At last to my great joy, I noticed that the elder baron showed signs of surrender.

Like a prudent general I ordered an attack all along the line.

There was to be a fox hunt the next day. I directed one of my trusted lieutenants to feed the hounds all the raw meat they could swallow, about an hour before the start.

Ten others, most fleet-footed and glib-tongued, I dispatched to the houses of the ten leading physicians and surgeons of the town and its immediate neighborhood, with the same message to each, namely, that every man, woman and child at the



THE TEN BOTTLES OF MEDICINE BROUGHT BY THE TEN DOCTORS.

manor house had been taken violently ill, and that the greatest haste must be made to come with their medicine chests so that the epidemic might be checked.

The ten doctors galloped into the courtyard at nearly the same moment, only to find the elder baron and his friends gathered on the platform and holding a whispered consultation over the strange actions of the hounds. The angry disciples of Galen refused to prescribe for the poor animals, and galloped away again with their well-filled holsters thumping against their legs.

Meanwhile I had not been idle.

To the claws of a score or more of the elder baron's fowls I tied a kind of fuzee of my own invention, so inflammable that the slightest friction would cause it to burst into flame, and then I turned them loose in the fields and garden adjoining the family hall.

They had been cooped up all the Summer, and were overjoyed at the prospect of a good, comfortable scratching time 'mid the dry leaves and stubble of the open fields.

The gamekeepers by this time had succeeded in arousing the hounds somewhat from their stupor, when the cry of "fire! fire!" went up. The hunting party hastily dismounted and joined the servants in the mad rush for buckets of water.

I was sitting calmly in my apartment, with Bulger by my side, when the alarm was raised.

The elder baron at first was inclined to think that although my workmanship was plainly visible in the fabrics of mischief, which consisted in overfeeding the hounds and summoning the ten doctors to the manor house on a wild goose chase, yet the breaking out of the fire in the neighboring gardens and fields was really something with which I had nothing to do. The return of a venerable old Dominick rooster, which had been either too feeble or too lazy to explode the fuzees attached to his claws, settled the matter, however.

The elder baron's mind was now clear as to who had conceived the crime in which his poor fowls had so unwittingly become the accomplices.

That night Bulger and I went to bed with light hearts.

The elder baron had at last consented to let us set out on our first journey in quest of strange adventures among the curious people of far-away lands.

THE FOWLS THAT WOULDN'T SCRATCH, AND SO BETRAYED ME.

CHAPTER V.

Preparations for my first voyage. The elder Baron selects the port from which I am to sail. Description of port No Man's Port. How I escaped its quicksands, Whirlpool and Thor's Hammer. Becalmed on the Southern Seas, I rescue my ship in a wonderful way. Land ho! Something about a beautiful Island. I leave my ship and start for the interior. How I fell in with some most extraordinary beings. Description of them. They leave me to go and request permission of their chief to present me at his court. How I thought myself attacked by a band of gigantic beings. My strange mistake. They prove to be the same beings I had met the day before. What had caused the transformation. The land of the Wind Eaters. I am conducted to the court of Ztwish-Ztwish. More about the curious people. The Chief's affection for me. The bursting of the babies. Go-Whizz becomes my enemy. I grow thin. Queen Phew-yoo wants me to marry Princess Pouf-fâh. To regain my flesh I teach the Wind Eaters to catch fish. Terrible accident resulting from a fire I had kindled. Go-Whizz demands my death. Ztwish-Ztwish refuses. The furious brawler tries to slay the Chief and is himself slain, by Ztwish-Ztwish. To avoid the marriage with Pouf-fâh, I send Bulger back to the ship, and then escape in the night. Too weak to bear the fatigue, I am overtaken. Enmeshed in the nets of the Wind Eaters and nearly beaten to death. Bulger rescues me. The relief party from my ship come up with me. I reach the coast, and after a short rest, sail for home.

BULGER HELPS ME WITH MY PACKING.

I threw myself now heart and soul into the task of making ready for my first voyage.

Bulger was not slow to understand what all the hurry-skurry meant.

He was delighted at the prospect of a trip to distant lands where life had less monotony about it. By the hour he would sit and watch me at my labors and, from time to time, to please him, I pointed out articles lying here and there about the room and bade him fetch them, which he invariably did, with many manifestations of pleasure at being permitted to help his little master.

In fact, everybody lent a hand most kindly, so that, to my great satisfaction, I was left more time for the study of navigation.

My poor mother, the gracious baroness, would not permit anyone else to mark my clothing. With her own slender, white fingers she worked the crest and initials of my wardrobe.

There was a matter which I turned over in my thoughts for several days, to wit: What national garb I should adopt.

After long and mature deliberation I resolved to attire myself in Oriental dress. I did so for several reasons. It had been a favorite garb of mine.

Its picturesque grace appealed to my love of the beautiful, while on the other hand, its ease and lightness made it very agreeable to one of extreme suppleness of limb and elasticity of step. While the old manor house was being literally turned topsy-turvy and everybody, from cook to chambermaid, set by the ears, the elder baron was by no means idle. He took good care, among other things, that I was well provided with wholesome reading matter, and brought me several books of maxims, precepts, reflections, thoughts and studies, which he requested me to thrust into the empty corners of my chests, "for," said he, and that, too, with a great show of reason, "thou wilt have many idle hours on thy hands in calm weather. It behooves thee to feed thy mind lest its wonderful development be checked and thou become as an ordinary child, with no thoughts above games and picture books." My poor mother, the gracious baroness, added to this stock of good literature by presenting me with a small volume entitled: "The Straight Road to Good Health; or, Everybody His Own Doctor." As to my medicine chest, I gave that my personal supervision, for I was always skilled in the art of reading all kinds of symptoms and was gifted with the rare faculty of knowing almost instinctively what remedy to give for a certain ailment, without first experimenting upon the patient by trying one thing after another, as is the custom with most people who pretend to heal sickness.

Everything was going well now, and I was in the best of spirits, when the elder baron came to me with a proposal which,

TRUE PORTRAITS OF BULGER AND ME; I AS I APPEARED IN MY ORIENTAL DRESS.

for some reason, I can hardly tell why, displeased me, although it would seem that it ought to have had the opposite effect. He proposed to precede me, by a week or ten days, to the North Sea, in some port of which I intended to purchase and fit out a swift, staunch vessel, purchase the vessel himself, give his personal attention to fitting her out and shipping a crew of picked men.

What could I do?

If I refused his offer, it would have been tantamount to a confession of distrust on my part.

Can he have in mind any project to thwart my scheme?

O, perish the thought!

But I must confess that I did not accept his proffered services without serious misgivings.

This sudden anxiety on the part of the elder baron to hurry my departure, after having opposed it so long and so vigorously, made me a little uneasy in my mind.

Before setting out for the North Sea to purchase a ship for me, the elder baron entered my apartment, and spoke as follows:

"Pardon me, little baron, for interrupting thy labors, for I perceive that thou art deep in the study of navigation."

"Speak, Baron," said I, looking up, with a mischievous smile, "that right belongs to thee."

"I have a last request to make," he continued, in his usual calm manner, "nor is it a matter of very great importance. Rather is it a whim, more than aught else. Thou knowest from my lips, and from the perusal of our family chronicles, that we were in ancient time very large land owners on the coast of the North Sea. We controlled several ports, were extensively engaged in trade, sending out at least a score of ships in a twelvemonth. One of the ports of our domain was a famous one, famous for the extraordinary character of its inlet and outlet currents, channel, etc. It was said of this port that it was more dangerous than the open sea, that vessels were really safer out of it than in it. I know not how much of truth may be in all this, but I do know that one

man, an ancestor of ours, not only sailed into it, but safely out again, for thou must know that the channel by which a vessel gained admission to this port could not be used to leave it again, as the irresistible current always flowed the one way, namely, from the sea into this mysterious basin. To leave it, the bold mariner must trust his bark to another channel, and therein lurked the danger.

It would gratify me greatly, little baron, if thou couldst prove to the world that, no matter how difficult other captains once found, and now find it, to sail out of this port, yet to thee it offered no insurmountable obstacles, and therefore, am I come to ask thee to set sail from this port!"

"It is called?" I asked carelessly, as I turned to a chart of the North Sea.

"Port No Man's Port," replied the baron.

"I like its name," said I. "Order my ship to await me there!"

The elder baron arose, and bending his body with stately grace, withdrew. I accompanied him to the door and dismissed him with most respectful obeisance.

"Port No Man's Port," I answered. "Ah, here is the chart!" The descriptive text reads as follows:

Abandoned for many years; ingress easy; egress so dangerous as to mean fatal injury, if not destruction, to sailing craft; outer channel blocked by a fearful whirlpool and swinging rock called "Thor's Hammer;" inner basin extremely dangerous from constantly shifting sands; closed by order of the Royal Ministry of Commerce and Marine." Upon finishing the reading of these words I sprang up and began to pace the floor, wildly and half unconsciously.

The blood rushed in upon my brain. I was obliged to halt and cling to the back of a tall oak chair, or I should have staggered and fallen to the ground.

Bulger was greatly alarmed and sent up a suppressed howl of grief. I spoke to him as calmly as I could to comfort him.

After a few moments the vertigo passed off and my mind cleared up completely.

"Nay, it is impossible." I whispered, "the elder baron could not be guilty of bad faith to me! Away with such a thought! He errs through thoughtlessness and lack of experience. He little knows the terribly dangerous character of the task he is setting me. To him, the talks of shipwreck and death within Port No Man's Port are but the legends of old-time sailor-life. He has not the faintest suspicion that his request, so lightly made, exposes his only child, son and heir to a princely fortune and honored name, either to be engulfed by these shifting sands, sucked down to destruction by this fearful whirlpool, or crushed by a blow from Thor's Hammer."

And yet why murmur?

It is too late to protest. Already the elder baron has proclaimed to the world the, to him proud piece of news, that his son was about to renew the old-time glories of his family! I must do one of two things: Face these dangers like a man of cool, calm courage, or condemn myself to a life of dull and listless activity, the magnate of a province and not the hero of two worlds!

No! the die is cast!

I have said it and it is as good as done!

My ship sails from Port No Man's Port, or this little body feeds its fish that day!"

Doubtless my eyes brightened, and my cheeks took on a glow of crimson hue, for Bulger, who had been listening to my soliloquy with a most pained expression on his face, as he vainly tried to get at the meaning of my words, now broke out into a very lively succession of barks, bounding and springing about the room in the wildest merriment. He knew only too well that some terrible struggle had been going on in my mind.

Now he realized that all was well. Faithful creature, if he could only tell his love, how he would put all human lovers to blush!

As the hour drew near for me to bid adieu to the baronial hall, that good lady, the gracious baroness, my mother, suddenly thought of a thousand and one things which she deemed of the very greatest importance to me. She warned me that I

was not to sleep in a draught; not to partake of freshly-baked bread; not to drink cold water while overheated; not to cut my finger nails too short; not to sleep with my mouth open; not to wear my underclothing longer than one week; not to neglect to brush my teeth; not to fail to have my hair cut with the new moon; not to strain my eyes reading by a poor light;: not to swallow my food without thoroughly chewing it; not to laugh while I had food in my mouth; not to attempt to stop a sneeze; not to neglect to pare my corns; not to pick my teeth with a metal point; not to examine the end of my nose without a looking-glass; not to eat meat without pepper, or vegetables without salt; not to exert myself after a hearty meal; not to stand upon my leg while it was asleep; not to walk so fast as to get a pain in my side; not to go to sleep until I had first rested on my right side; not to fail to take a pill if I saw flashes in the dark; not to neglect to tie a stocking around my neck in case my throat felt sore, etc., etc., etc. When the moment came to take leave of the gracious baroness, my good mother, I was deeply moved. All the servants and retainers, from indoors and out, filed in front of me, kissed my hand and showered blessings on me.

I may safely say that the only being present not moved to tears was Bulger. He was so anxious to get under way that he passed an hour or so racing from the manor house to the carriage and back again in a piteous endeavor to get the procession started.

Start we did, at last.

A hundred hands waved us a fond farewell.

The stately trees that shut in the baronial hall swayed solemnly. I was glad when we rolled out of the court yard for I needed rest and quiet.

My nerves had been on such a stretch for the past month that a change of scene brought me balm and relaxation.

My journey to the North Sea was quiet and uneventful.

I found my ship safely anchored in Port No Man's Port, and the elder baron there in charge of her. He introduced me to the sailing-master, pressed me in his own loving arms, and

with a gracious smile and stately wave of the hand, seated himself in the family coach. His only adieu was:

"My son, thy wisdom comes to thee by inheritance. Thou couldst not have acquired it. Therefore, make a noble use of so noble a gift. Farewell!"

I bent my head in silence. The carriage rolled away. I stood alone. Nay, a true and loving friend was there. He looked up with his large, lustrous eyes, as if to say:

"Don't be sad, little master. No matter who goes, I'll stay by thee forever!"

Turning to my sailing-master, I ordered the ship's launch to be manned, and began at once a survey of the mysterious port in which my ship lay anchored.

I found it to be a roomy basin, shut in by a rock-bound shore. In places the waters slept beneath black and glassy surfaces; in others, all was movement and commotion. Its waves came boiling and bubbling against the launch with swirling masses of white sand, shifting hither and thither, as if condemned to perpetual unrest.

The fact that my men, while fishing in different parts of the bay, often caught deep-sea fish, proved to me that Port No Man's Port was traversed by a channel from four to six fathoms in depth.

The only difficulty would be to fix the boundaries of this constantly shifting path long enough to sail across the basin.

I next turned my attention to the whirlpool. It marked the junction of the outer channel with the basin of Port No Man's Port.

Having purchased a number of condemned hulks for the purpose of testing the strength and fury of the whirlpool, I caused a strong hawser to be rigged to a capstan on shore, and was in this way enabled to let the launch approach within a ship's length of the whirlpool with perfect safety. In truth, it was, when roused to the full measure of its fury by the intrusion of any large floating body, a sight to strike terror to the stoutest heart!

With a deep booming and rumble, its waters rose in tumultu-

ous commotion, boiling, bubbling, seething, till snow-white foam covered the pool like a mantle of bleached linen, then lifting the intruder, which in this case was one of the hulks that I had ordered to be launched upon them, these angered waters whirled it completely around. In an instant, as if exhausted by this tremendous effort, a mysterious calm sank upon the pool. The foam-sheet, broken in shreds, danced gently on the rippling bosom of the waters. All was peace, save that the hulk still lay trembling like an affrighted being in the lap of this resting monster!

For, look! It is aroused again. Faster and faster it whirls its prey. Deeper and deeper its now wide-opened jaws draw down the ill-fated hulk!

A terrible roar tells that the end is near!

'Tis gone!

Ay, but wait! It will give up its prey again!

Even now bits of plank float seaward, dancing on the rushing waters.

Soon the crumpled, broken, crushed remnants of that strong hulk will follow.

This watery monster doth not feed upon what he swallows! He destroys for the mere love of destruction. Night had come now. I returned to my ship. The shifting sands and the whirlpool had uncovered their horrors. But I feared them no more! Like the horse-tamer when he has at last succeeded in thrusting the steel bit between the champing and gnashing teeth of the wild young steed, I now felt that they were conquered.

"And now for Thor's Hammer!" was my cry, as I sat down beside Bulger for a brief moment's reflection.

The first streak of gray light in the east found me on deck.

"Thor's Hammer" was a huge shaft of black, flinty rock, projecting about twenty feet out of the water and ending in a hammer-shaped head. It guarded the channel where it reached the sea, standing exactly in the middle, thus forcing a vessel to pass on one side or the other of it.

Beneath the waters, this dread sentinel must have ended

in a gigantic ball, which, in the flight of time had worn a socket for itself in the bed rock of the channel; for it swung loose and free, moved by every powerful billow from side to side, threatening swift destruction to any passing craft.

To speak frankly, the sight of this terrible engine of destruction appalled me! How shall I escape the vigilance of this gigantic sentinel, who knows no sleep, no rest, whose blows fall with like fury on friend or foe? How shall I lull him to repose for a few brief moments?

Determined to study closely the strength, the rapidity, and the character of the blows struck by "Thor's Hammer," I caused several huge structures of plank and timber to be erected near the position of this mighty sentinel of rock. One after the other I ordered them to be thrown into the channel.

At first, I was fairly paralyzed upon discovering that even the slight vortex caused by the drifting by of one of these wooden structures set the swinging rock in violent vibration and always towards the passing object.

Judging from the effect of Thor's Hammer upon these floating masses of plank and timber, a single blow would suffice to crush the very life out of my ship in spite of her unusual staunchness.

I stood transfixed with dread forebodings. I could feel the beads of perspiration break from my forehead and trickle down my cheeks. Must I give up and return home, broken in spirits, humiliated, the butt of ridicule, the target of village wit, the subject of mirth and laughter in every peasant's cottage?

Oh, no! It can not, it must not be!

Like a flash of lightning, a thought flamed across the dark horizon of my mind.

Am I not dreaming? Was it really so?

One of the wooden structures still remained. Controlling my emotion with great difficulty, I ordered it thrown into the channel and took up a favorable position to watch once again the wrath of the towering sentinel! In a few moments "Thor's Hammer" felt the coming of the craft and bent itself in impotent rage beating the air with blows which fell faster and

faster! Ay, I was right! When once Thor's Hammer had begun its labor of death and ruin, it turned not from its task, so long as there remained any object for it to spend its fury upon!

Nor was there any escape for the ill-fated craft until it had been pounded into flinders! Hanging over it, blow followed blow with fearful clash and clamor. Not until the poor remnant had drifted seaward, did that black and flinty shaft cease its furious swinging.

Turning to my sailing-master, who stood with his wondering eyes fixed full upon me, I called out in a calm and careless tone: "In three days, skipper, if the weather is clear, we leave Port No Man's Port!"

A lump rose up in his throat, but he gulped it down, and cried out merrily:

"Ay, ay, sir."

And what three busy days they were, too! My men were not long in catching something of the indomitable spirit of their new commander. I worked them hard, but I fed them well, served out grog with a liberal, but wise hand, and saw that all their wants were satisfied. In turn, their wonderment became admiration, and their admiration affection.

The first day all the hands that could be spared were set to work making fishing lines, with a good, stout hook at one end and a cork float at the other. The lines were cut about three fathoms in length, and the floats were painted a bright crimson. I then gave orders to rig three jury-masts, one midships, and one fore and aft.

My men set to work with a will, but I caught them several times in the act of tapping their foreheads and exchanging significant glances. But if this last order threw them into a brown study, my next had the effect of a bombshell exploding in their midst.

Sailing-master and all, they stood staring at me as if they were only waiting for me to annihilate them.

My order was to rig a steering gear under the figure-head. A coasting vessel, which I had sent for, now came sailing

leisurely into Port No Man's Port. I directed the skipper to pay her crew three months' extra wages, and discharge them.

This done, my men were ordered to lash the coaster on our starboard side.

I verily believe that my whole plan, so carefully studied out, was at this point only saved from utter failure by the wisdom of my faithful Bulger.

The coaster had no sooner been lashed to our side than he sprang lightly over the railing, and began to amuse himself by gamboling up and down the clear deck. Suddenly he paused near one of the hatches and broke out into a most furious barking. I called to one of my officers to look sharp and see what the matter was. He reported in a few moments that one of the discharged seamen had been found concealed in the hold. When I threatened to put him in irons, he confessed that his design had been to cut the coaster loose as soon as our ship had drawn near to the whirlpool.

It was a narrow escape.

Dear, faithful Bulger, how much we owe thee for that discovery!

The third day dawned bright and fair.

The wind was most favorable, blowing strong off shore.

At the first glimmer of light, my men were astir and on the lookout for my appearance.

They greeted Bulger and me with three hearty cheers.

They had made up their minds that what I didn't know, Bulger did! At last all was ready!

I nodded to the sailing-master, and in a moment or so the capstan began to revolve, and the merry "Yo, heave O!" of the men told me that the anchor had been started. Hundreds of the lines and floats, well-baited, were now cast overboard. Standing on the taffrail, glass in hand, I watched them closely and anxiously.

Imagine my joy at seeing several of these crimson floats disappear like a flash, rise again, and again vanish for an instant.

"The first point is gained," I cried out. "I have found the channel!"

Passing word quickly to the sailing-master who was in charge of the steering gear, my good vessel moved slowly out of Port No Man's Port, stern first. Again and again the baited lines with their crimson floats were thrown overboard. The deep water fish that swarmed the ever-shifting channel kept steadily at work. As our ship advanced, they tugged at the lines and thus kept the tortuous course plainly marked out. Glass in hand, I watched the successful working of this part of my plan, with tingling veins and a bounding heart. A loud huzza from my men tell me that we have cleared the shifting sands. Ay, true it is! We have crossed the basin of Port No Man's Port! Its dreaded quicksands swirl and roll in vain. It was not fated that they should engulf the Little Baron's ship!

But see! The channel narrows! The waters grow black, and troubled. And hark!

Didn't you hear that dull roar? I spring down from the taffrail! I pass among my men and drop here and there a word of encouragement. My perfect calmness impresses them. No merry "ay, ay, Sir!" goes up, but I see a response in their faces. It is: "We trust you little captain, speak!" The dull roar grows louder and louder.

The rapids catch us up and bear us along like chips on the foaming tide of a mountain stream. Our staunch vessel rocks like a toy boat. The coaster lashed to one side creaks and groans in its wild efforts to break away.

Calling Bulger to me I pass the line around him and lash him firmly to the main-mast, for I was fearful lest a sudden lurch might hurl him overboard. On, on, we speed through the frightened waters. The roar is deafening. I glance at my seamen. Their bronzed faces are blanched. They cling to the shrouds and stays. Their eyes are riveted upon me.

Look! the fearful whirlpool is dead ahead of us. It opens its foam-flecked jaws like some terrible monster. We leap into its very mouth. Are we lost? How can it be otherwise? As if our staunch vessel were a nut-shell, the swirling, raging, whirling, battling, boiling waters catch her up in their encircling arms, lift her high above the sea level, turn her completely

around and drop her with such terrific force that great walls of water rise on all sides and threaten to engulf the frail wooden thing. But most wondrous change; mark how she floats upon a glassy pool! The foam dances in the sunlight on the rippling waves. All is peace where but a moment before nature raged with demoniac fury. Quick as thought I leap into the mizzen shrouds: "Cut away the jury-masts!" They fall overboard with a crash. My men work with a mad earnestness. They know too well that every instant may be their last. Our mainsail already hoisted is sheeted home without a word or a cry. We are too near death to sing! See! See! The wind fills the great sail! We move. The waters seem to scent our escape. They are awaking to new fury. A deep rumble from the very bowels of the earth calls upon them to arouse from their lethargy.

They reach out for us.

Too late! too late!

We sweep out of their reach. We are saved! We are saved! A shout goes up from two score throats, from which Fear now takes her hand!

Look back! As if robbed of its prey, the whirlpool awakes with redoubled fury.

A hundred arm-like streams of water gush forth and pour around our good ship in vain effort to draw her back into that terrible vortex.

We are drenched with clouds of spray and mist, as we slowly but steadily keep on our course. Would that we were safe upon the swelling tide of the open sea, for there is still another danger to be met.

Our channel suddenly narrows. I could toss a biscuit to the rocky wall, which shuts us in on both sides.

Again a deep silence falls upon ship and crew, broken only by a strange sound of rushing waters, bursting out and dying away as regularly as the swing of a pendulum. 'Tis Thor's Hammer, beating the frightened waters into foam, as it sways from side to side.

In spite of my effort to appear calm, I can feel my heart beat faster.

A cold chill benumbs my hands. A glance ahead startles me like a blow from an unseen hand. There, with the morning sun resting on its hammer-shaped crest, swings that dreaded shaft of flinty rock, threatening instant destruction to any ship bold enough to attempt to pass it.

In accordance with my orders, every sail on the coaster had been set, and her helm lashed, so as to pass to the right of Thor's Hammer.

"Courage, men!" I cried. "Stand by, all! Cut away the lashings! Cast off the tender!"

Then waving my hand to the skipper, our mainsail came down with a run. Everything worked like a charm. Our ship slowed up, while the coaster shot ahead to her destruction. See, how gallantly the doomed craft speeds on her way; for the breeze had freshened, and several gay streamers and flags, which my men had run up to the topmast, fluttered in the crisp morning air.

There! Did you not hear that crash?

Thor's Hammer has struck her!

Blow follows blow!

Crash! Crash! Crash!

Now is our time, or never!

I was not caught napping. The moment we were clear of the coaster, I had ordered sails enough to be set to hold our ship steady on her course.

Already we drew near to Thor's Hammer, which is fast battering the coaster to a shapeless mass. The sea is filled with bits of plank and broken timber. Thor's Hammer bends to its dread work of destruction, unmindful of our presence.

What could withstand its terrible fury?

Those sturdy timbers yield like twigs.

Another minute, and we have the monster and his victim in our wake!

Now, now, we're passing him! Our sails tremble from the very force of his breath! Our deck is strewn with splinters! The roar and crash are deafening. Thor's Hammer bends for one last blow at the ribs and keel of its broken and disjointed victim!

Hurrah! Hurrah!

Our good ship dips to the deep roll of the ocean's breast! We are on the open sea! Port No Man's Port, farewell!

As my men looked back at the rocky gateway and the grim sentinel of Port No Man's Port, they tossed their caps into the air and sent up cheer after cheer.

Bulger bounded about the deck, doing his best by most vigorous barking, to testify his admiration for his little master.

The sailing-master drew near; and, touching his cap and scratching the deck with the toe of his shoe, cried out gayly:

"Bravo! little Baron. That was splendidly done! I was sure we should never get through the shifting sands. And when they were passed, I was ready to swear the whirlpool would make short work of us. But when we sailed safely out of that, I drew near the taffrail ready to jump overboard, for I felt that nothing could save us from a blow from Thor's Hammer. I've grown wrinkled and gray facing the storms of Neptune's domain, but I never felt I had a master until now."

I nodded and smiled, and quickly turned the conversation to some other topic.

"By the way, skipper," said I, "remember, the very moment we clear the English Channel, turn her head southward!"

"Ay! ay! little Baron!" was the reply. Calling Bulger to me I now went below. I wanted to be alone. The fact of the matter is, I needed rest. The terrible strain on my nerves caused by the hopes and fears of the past few days, began to tell upon me.

Throwing myself upon a canopy, I fell into a deep sleep from which I was awakened by Bulger's whining and crying.

The sailing-master was anxiously feeling my pulse.

I had slept three days and three nights. All this time Bulger had absolutely refused to leave my side or partake of food, although the skipper had tempted him with the daintiest morsels.

His joys knew no bounds as I sprang up and shook myself into shape.

"Where are we, master?" I cried.

"On the broad Atlantic, headed dead south, little Baron!" was the answer.

"Good! send me a rasher of bacon and some hard-tack. The Atlantic breeze has given me an appetite and, skipper," I added, "a little broiled fowl for Bulger."

"And now, for the land of warmth and sunshine!" I murmured, "now for the home of the orange and the palm! Cold winds like me not, I am a child of the tropics, born in a land where nature works and man plays. No chill blast ever whistled its sad tune over my cradle! Let those who will, spend one-half their lives waiting for mother Earth to wake from her Winter sleep! Freeze the body and you freeze the brain. I am of those who love flowers better than snowflakes. Glorious South land! I greet thee, thy child comes again to thy arms, oh, take him up kindly and lovingly!"

* * * *

Southward, ever southward my good ship sped along. By day I paced the deck to watch the dolphins at play or to observe Bulger's amazement when a stray flying fish fell fluttering on deck; by night, with my eyes fixed upon the blazing Southern Cross, I longed for the time to come when I should set foot upon some beautiful strand decked out with coral branch and shells of pearl, in whose limpid waters golden fish nestle mid sea plants of not less brilliant hue.

It was now three weeks since the last murmur of Thor's Hammer had fallen on our ears.

My chronometer marked high noon. Every sail was set and our good ship careened as gracefully as a swallow that bent in its flight to touch the cool waters of some glassy lake. All of a sudden the wind fell, our ship stood still on the motionless sea, my pennant hung like a string. There was not air enough to lift the smoke from our galley fire. A strange mysterious stillness weighed upon the ship and sea. I knew too well what it betokened. One of those dreaded calms, more feared by the seamen that the buffeting gale, had overtaken us.

Our ship stood like one moored to a marble wharf!

And as the thought flashed across my mind that days, ay even weeks might pass ere the winds would lift themselves again to bear us on our way, a feeling of utter listlessness came over me. It required a great exertion for me to throw it off.

I dared not let my men see aught of discouragement in my face.

And yet, it was a hard task. Had I not been made of stern stuff, I would have wept to see my progress stayed at the very moment victory was almost within my grasp.

Again, as was the case, when the terrors of Port No Man's Port rose, like demons of malignant might, to shut me forever in that rock-encircled basin, did my thoughts revert to home —to the elder baron and his gracious consort, my dear mother; to the servants and retainers of the baronial hall; to the villagers and tenantry. How, oh how should I be able to face them all, if I were forced to return home with the humiliating confession that my voyage had been a failure?

Bulger was the first to catch a glimpse of the shadow on my brow. He turned his dark lustrous eyes full upon me so pleadingly as if to say: "Oh, little master, what aileth thee? May I not do aught to drive the dark melancholy from thy face? Thou knowest how I love thee. Teach me to help thee. My life is thine. Thy grief weighs like lead on my heart. Speak to me little master!" Tenderly and lovingly I stroked his head, and spoke in softest tones to him. He was rejoiced, but still he sat and watched me, for it was impossible to deceive him by feigning to be lighthearted and unconcerned.

The second week found us lying like a log in a millpond, our sails unvisited by the faintest breath of air; the sea sunken into a sleep that seemed like death. Despair sat on the faces of my men. "Rouse thee, little baron!" I murmured to myself as I paced my cabin floor, "where is thy boasted cunning? Where is thy vaunted wisdom? Nevermore say that thou art a man of projects, quick to devise, and quick to perform! Thou hast lost thy hold on the spoke of fortune's wheel!"

"Thinkest thou so?" cried I in answer to my own thoughts. "Follow me, we shall see!" With a bound I cleared the gang

way. The sailing-master lay asleep on the deck. The men in groups, here and there, looked the very picture of despair,. Rousing the skipper with a vigorous tug at his belt, aided by Bulger's frantic outburst of barking, I called out:

"Avast! there, skipper. Asleep from overwork? Pipe all hands on deck!" The men came up in lively fashion, greatly amused by my cut at the sailing-master, who stood rubbing his eyes, half dazed by my sudden outburst. "Send me the ships carpenter!" I continued; and catching up a piece of chalk I drew the plan of a large box or chest, nearly as long as our ship's breadth of beam, and gave the carpenter directions to build it of the strongest planks to be had on board. He and his assistants were soon at work.

Turning then to the cook I ordered him to kill the pigs and fowls we had shipped for our own supply of fresh meat, bidding him to be careful and not lose a drop of the blood.

These orders fairly drove my men wild with curiosity.

The sailing-master drew near and attempted to get some explanation from me but in vain. I was too deep in thought to speak.

The long box was ready in a few hours. Word now went up that I was about to abandon the ship and strive to reach land by rowing, and that this long box was to hold the provisions.

The sailing-master again fixed his gaze inquiringly upon me. I pretended not to notice his beseeching looks. The cook by this time had the fresh meat in readiness. Under my directions it was all transferred to the long chest, the blood poured over it, and the box securely closed with a heavy plate-glass lid, made up of several pieces shipped for the purpose of restoring broken lights. By this time the men had grown so excited over this mysterious box and its still more mysterious contents, that I was obliged to order them to fall back so that the carpenter and his assistants might go on with their work without interruption.

The next step was to weight the long chest with lead and to attach hoisting tackle to each end by strong iron rings. When all was ready I called out to my men to stand by and lower it

over the stern rail. Stationed so that I could watch the lowering of the long box, I was careful to sink it about three feet under water and then lash it firmly to the ship's stern. I had scarcely given the word to lower away on all the sails when the ship began to move! The effect on my men was indescribable. Some turned pale and stood as if transfixed with fear. Others laughed in a wild maniac-like way. Others, who had their wits about them, rushed to the stern taffrail to fathom the mystery.

A glance was enough!

It was a simple thing after all.

Gradually the others recovered their reason, and hastened to join their companions and gaze down into the waters where I had lashed the long box, with its glass lid and strange contents. Meanwhile our good ship moved faster and faster through the sluggish, listless waters. A ringing cheer, three times repeated, went up when the mystery was fully solved.

Mystery?

Hear then what this mystery consisted of!

In the first days of this dead calm, which settled like a terrible blanket spread over us by the hands of some unseen monster, to check our advance, I had noticed that the waters swarmed with sharks of extraordinary length; that these fierce demons of the deep hung about our vessel in shoals of countless numbers, attracted by the garbage thrown overboard, and, doubtless, too, by the odor of the many living beings on board the ship.

When, at times, a particularly large supply of garbage fell into the water, so fierce was the onslaught of these ravenous monsters, that they actually jarred the ship as they struck against its sides or stern, locked together like advancing cohorts of trained soldiery.

Upon this hint I acted. If, as I reasoned, I can only control this now wild force, why may I not make use of it to rescue my ship from a worse danger than raging storm? For far better would it be to face the howling blast and foam-crested wave than to perish from thirst, chained to the open sea by this breathless calm.

Now, however, all was changed.

On, on, our good ship went, with ever-increasing speed, gliding noiselessly and swiftly through the mirror-like waters. My device worked far better than I had dared to dream, for, as the fresh blood began to trickle through the crevices of the long box, the ravenous sea monsters were almost maddened by its smell and taste. The largest and fiercest pressed forward in serried ranks, tossing their smaller companions high in the air, as they took up their places with wild and eager search for prey which lured them on, ever so near them, and still ever beyond their reach.

No sooner did the foremost ranks of this army of myrmidons of the deep show signs of fatigue than long lines of fresh and eager recruits darted forward, hurling their exhausted fellows right and left, like bits of cork, and took up the task of following the ever-retreating prey, which, although giving out its life blood, and plainly visible to them, yet seemed to know no tiring, and sped onward, and ever onward before the wild, tumultuous attack of thir pushing, plunging cohorts!

The moon now shone like a plate of burnished silver on the blue walls of heaven, and the deep silence of the sleeping waters was broken by the splash of those mighty bodies, glistening in her light, as they toiled and struggled to urge our vessel on its way.

I could not sleep.

Wrapped in a woolen cloak, to shield me from the insidious dews of the tropics, I threw myself on deck, with Bulger's head pillowed on my lap.

Something whispered to me that if those hunger-stricken marauders of the deep would only keep to their task till the morning sun streaked the east, my cheek would feel the breath of coming winds.

And so it turned out. With the first glimmer of daylight I caught sight of a ripple on the lake-like bosom of the ocean. At that very moment, too, I noticed that our ship was slowing up. I sprang up on the taffrail. Lo! our allies had abandoned us. Not a single follower of that riotous camp was in sight!

Ah, little did they dream how they had saved ship and crew! How limitless is man's selfishness! The beasts of the field, the monsters of the deep must minister to his pleasure, obey his commands. I had pointed out the ripple in the water and when the first sturdy breath of wind reached us we were in readiness to receive it. Every sail was set.

My heart leaped with joy as our ship drew up to the wind, obeying her helm like a thing of life!

And that was the way I saved my ship and crew from a worse danger than storm-lashed billows. From this time on, all went well. Scarcely a week had gone by when I was startled by a cry which sounded sweeter to my ears than voice of monarch to courtier.

"Land ho! Dead ahead!"

Seizing my glass I sprang up into the main-shrouds, and turned my gaze in the direction indicated. Ay, true it was! There it lay before us, rising from the ocean with gentle slope, its heights crowned with trees of many-colored foliage, its shores ending in long stretches of snow-white beach.

Above the unknown land hung a purple mist of a deep rich tint, like the cheek of a ripe plum. As we drew near a land-locked harbor seemed to welcome us. Not a sound or sign of life, however, came to break the deep repose which enveloped the bay and shore.

Slowly and in stately bearing our good ship sailed into the harbor and cast anchor. The radiant beauty of the land now burst upon me. Ten thousand shells of pearly tints and hues glistened on the white sands, while in the limpid waters, sea-flowers and foliage of deepest crimson swayed gently with the tide. Up the sloping banks nature seemed to be holding high carnival. No shrub or bush or tree was content to wear simple green. Each waved some blossom of richest radiance in the soft and balmy air. Here and there, a brooklet came tumbling down the hillside, rippling, purling and splashing over the moss-grown rocks in its bed. The air was heavy with the fragrance of this vast garden so beautiful and yet so silent and deserted.

The next day, leaving my sailing-master in command, I set out on a tramp, accompanied solely by my faithful Bulger. My idea was to see if this island, for such I thought it to be, contained anything quaint and curious. The further I advanced into the interior of this fair land of bright flowers, purling brooks, clear skies and perfumed air, the more was I astonished to find that neither vine, shrub, brush, nor tree bore any berry or fruit to feed upon; and though it was just such a land of brooks, flowers and balmy air as some dweller of the faraway North might dream about; yet was it untrodden by the foot of man, for, rare indeed is it that the people of the tropics are willing to prepare any other food for themselves than that which nature spreads before them.

I now began to be thankful that I had supplied myself plentifully with dried fruits before leaving my ship to set out for a tour of the island, for such it seemed to me to be.

At this moment Bulger halted, and raising his nose in the air, sniffed hard and long, and then fixed his dark eyes on me as much as to say: "Take care, little master, some sort of living creatures are approaching!" I had hardly time to draw one of my pistols and give a hasty glance at its priming when with strange cries and stranger movements a dozen or more beings of the human species sprang out of the thicket with noiseless steps, and surrounded us. I raised the fire-arm, which I held grasped in my right hand. ready to stop the advance of this band of most curious creatures, by slaying their leader; for, judging by the forbidding aspect of their faces and the terrible condition of their bodies, apparently reduced by the dread pangs of hunger, to mere sacks of skin hung on frames of bone, which methought rattled at every step they took, I anticipated an instant attempt on their part to strike us down and eat us.

But I was very quickly reassured. First, by the fact that they bore no weapons of any kind; and second, by the softness of their voices and the walkingbeam-like motions of their bodies, which I interpreted to mean a sort of welcome mingled with a desire to make friends with a human being so different

THE LITTLE BARON MAKES FRIENDS WITH GO-WHIZZ AND HIS BAND OF WIND EATERS.

from themselves. Although I gave them to understand, or tried to do so, by imitating the ducking motion of their heads, followed by an attempt to equal their performance in making a large number of very low bows, so graceful and easy that they would have done credit to a French dancing master, that they had nothing to fear, yet they continued to back away from me as fast as I advanced. Bulger was somewhat surprised at my eagerness to make friends with such a starved-out looking set of creatures and kept up a furious growling, eying them suspiciously as they continued the walkingbeam motion of their bodies all the while backing away from me.

I now found myself in front of a group of umbrella shaped bamboo huts into which most of them had retreated. With no little difficulty was it that I finally succeeded in coaxing them forth and convincing them that my intentions were perfectly peaceful. For a quarter of an hour or more, they circled about me in silent wonder, while I, on my part, gazed in speechless astonishment at these extraordinary looking specimens of our race. What they thought of me, you will learn as my story goes on, but how shall I ever describe them to you so as to give you even a faint idea of their wonderful appearance.

Imagine skeletons of rather small stature walking about, with collapsed meal bags hung upon them, skin hanging down in folds everywhere, flapping about at every step and you'll have some faint conception of the utterly ridiculous and grotesque look of these beings.

Almost every bone in their bodies was visible beneath this thin covering. Their cheeks hung like two empty pouches on each side of their faces, their noses stuck out like knife-blades. Deep wrinkles and creases crossed and criss-crossed their faces, giving them a look of terrible melancholy and utter wretchedness.

With their skeleton fingers ever and anon they grasped a fold of skin and smoothed it out or pushed it elsewhere as one might a loosely fitting garment. And yet, utterly wretched and melancholy as these creatures seemed to be to the eye of the looker-on, their voices were light and gay, and soft as flute notes.

They chatted and laughed among themselves, were full of mischief and pointed their pencil fingers at different parts of Bulger's and my body with evident enjoyment at the sight of things so new and strange to them. Several times while gazing upon these mournful and woebegone looking faces and at the same time listening to their happy and childlike chatter, I broke out into a peal of laughter which was not only very ill-bred, but which invariably had the effect of causing them to fall back in disorder.

Gradually, however, they grew bolder, and by means of a kind of sign language, gave me to understand that they desired to touch me. By recourse to the same common language of mankind, I informed them that I should be only too happy to gratify their requests and proceeded to lay bare my breast and roll up the sleeves of my coat. They half repented of their foolhardiness, and crowding together, interlocked their arms and legs in such a manner that, to save my life, I couldn't tell where one commenced and the other ended.

But after a few moment's coaxing, I succeeded in persuading them to advance and lay their hands upon me.

Loud outcries followed exclamations of wonder and astonishment. As I afterwards learned the words they uttered meant: "Lump!" "Chunk!" "Stone!" "Hard!" "Solid!" At this moment, feeling a little bit hungry, I opened my sack of dried fruit and thrust several pieces into my mouth.

And now came a still more furious outburst of wonder, mingled with cries of horror and disgust. Again they retreated and tied themselves into a knot.

Can it be, I asked myself, that these creatures never touch solid food?

Observing now that they were consulting among themselves as to what course to pursue in regard to me, and being afraid that they might take it into their heads to escape into the thicket, for they were as quick in their movements as sprites and phantoms, I lost no time in making them understand that I desired to be led into the presence of their King or ruler.

This seemed to please them. But with many duckings of

their heads, they withdrew a short distance, and held a sort of pow-wow. After which, one of their number, who seemed to be a sort of leader among them, and whose name, as I afterwards learned, was Go-Whizz, advanced toward me with numerous low-bendings of his body, and succeeded in informing me that their chief lived at a great distance from where we were, and that it would be necessary for me to remain here while they returned to their ruler to ask his permission to conduct me to him.

I readily consented to such an arrangement.

Go-Whizz then led me to one of their dwellings, pointed out a bed of nice dry rushes, and invited me to make myself comfortable until he should come again to conduct me into the presence of their chief, Ztwish-Ztwish, as was the name he bore.

Bulger and I didn't wait for a second bidding, for we were tired to the bone after our long tramp. With half a dozen or more bows, quite as low as those made by Go-Whizz and his companions, I began to make ready for a night's rest.

For a moment or so, I stood watching the retreating figures of these extraordinary people who, in single file, swiftly and noiselessly, like so many phantoms, had flitted away from the spot. Then throwing myself down on the bed of rushes, called out to Bulger to lie down by me. But he was not so trustful as I, and after caressing my hands, took up his position at the door of the dwelling, so as to save his little master from any treachery on the part of the phantom people.

Day now went out suddenly, like a lamp quenched by the wind.

Bulger refused to sleep.

But I, sheltered from the night dews by this thickly-thatched roof, soon fell into a deep and refreshing sleep, out of which Bulger found it difficult to arouse me, for I have a faint recollection of having felt him scratching at my arm for several moments, ere I could shake off the fetters of sleep, which held me bound so tightly.

Sitting up hastily, I discovered that Bulger was patrolling

the floor in a state of great excitement, pausng ever and anon to sniff the morning air, which, it was plain to be seen, brought him a warning of some kind. Instantly it occurred to me that wild beasts were prowling about in the neighborhood. I examined the priming of my fire-arms. Bulger looked well pleased to see that I was thoroughly aroused as to the threatening danger.

He now grew bolder, and springing out into the open air, made a circuit of the dwelling, only to return with bristling hair, and growling out his suspicion that all was not right.

His ever-increasing anxiety now began to cause me genuine alarm. I was upon the very point of making a hasty retreat to my vessel, when the thought flashed through my mind: "What! escape these swift-footed phantoms? It were idle to attempt it!" So I determined to take my chances, come what might.

The hut was strongly built and its roof would at least protect us from a flight of poisoned arrows.

While I was occupied in making a hasty survey of the place, a loud outcry from Bulger startled me. I gave one look and a shiver of fear zigzagged through my body.

An armed band was full in sight.

With fierce shouts, deep and rumbling, they came nearer and nearer. Their massive forms swayed from side to side. Their huge limbs, moved like walking oaks. Their arms seemed the sturdy branches ending in hands which, in the dim morning light, took the shape of gnarled and knotted knobs; terrific strength was shadowed forth by their broad and heavy shoulders. One blow from a hand of such sledge hammer weight would lay a frail creature like me helpless in the dust!

Bulger, brave as he was, quailed at the sight. In an instant I collected my thoughts and breathed a last goodbye to the elder baron and to the gentle baroness, my mother, in their faraway home beneath the northern skies.

Now they had reached the very doorway, and stood beating their huge chests and giving forth deep rumbling sounds.

Instinctively I unsheathed my poniard and brandished it in the air.

The effect was astounding!

With terrific cries, groans and shouts they fell back in the wildest terror, rolling over each other, bounding asunder like gigantic footballs, striking the earth and bounding into an erect position.

When at last these human air-bags settled down into something like rest, one of their number broke out into the most plaintive and beseeching speech which, I afterwards learned, had about the following meaning: "O, Master: O, Magician! O, Mysteriôus Lump! O, Impenetrable Chunk! put away that dread instrument! Prick us not with its awful point, pierce not our delicate skins. The slightest touch from that frightful blade would cause our bodies to burst like pricked balloons! Fear us not. We are thy friends. We come to conduct thee to our great chief, Ztwish-Ztwish. I am Go-Whizz, thy slave."

Suddenly the truth broke in upon my wondering mind. There was no falsehood in the speaker's words. It was Go-Whizz! The others were his companions—the wretched woe-begone bags of bones who had parted with me only the day before.

With a smile and gentle wave of the hand, I hastily returned my dagger to its sheath and gave Go-Whizz to understand that he had nothing to fear from me. Half crazed with curiosity I now advanced to take a closer look at Go-Whizz and his companions. Sober fact is it when I tell you that they were, man for man, the self same beings I first fell in with on my starting out to explore the island.

But this wonderful change you ask? How had they in one short night grown to such herculean build—arms and limbs as massive as those of Japanese wrestlers.

I reply it was all air! When I first met these gentlemen they had not dined. Now they had just come from a hearty meal. For, you must know that I was now in the land of the wonderful Wind Eaters! When the air is calm and the winds asleep, these curious people are obliged to fast, and, their skins hang in wrinkled bags as I have described; but when the wind starts up for a mad frolic or even a gentle puff and blow, these

strange creatures at once begin to increase in size, and not long is it before every wrinkle and crease disappear like magic.

As Go-Whizz and his companion stood before me, I was struck by the ridiculous contrast between their voices and the expression of their faces. Yesterday, with their fierce and forbidding faces their voices were soft and flute-like; to-day, their voices were terrible, deep and rumbling, while their faces now puffed out smooth and round seemed wreathed in smiles and good humor.

As I stood lost in wonder at the sight of these strangely-transformed beings, Go-Whizz rumbled out something which I easily understood to be a request that I should permit him to conduct me to the residence of his great chief, Ztwish-Ztwish.

I smiled assent and set about gathering up my traps.

Bulger was completely nonplussed and fixed his lustrous eyes upon me as much as to say:

"Dear little master, how canst thou trust thyself to these huge mountains of flesh, a single one of whom could crush thy frail body as easily as I would a mouse?"

I gave him a few caresses and stroked his silken coat, to let him know I was sure that I was right. Go-Whizz and his band, clumsy as they seemed, were by no means slow of pace. They moved forward at a brisk rate for the air was calm and they had little to carry. Now and then, upon bumping together, they bounded apart like rubber balls. It was a difficult thing for me to keep from laughing, especially when I saw Bulger's look of utter perplexity. He rolled his eyes up at me in the most comical manner. However, at last we entered the village of the Wind Eaters, where the great chief, Ztwish-Ztwish held his court.

He too was puffed out pretty round, although, as I afterwards learned, the laws of the land did not allow him to eat as heartily as his subjects. Here and there a wrinkle was visible. His face and arms didn't have that look of puffy tightness common to his people after a hearty meal. He had already been fully informed of my arrival on his island, and of my extraordinary weight and hardness for my size.

It took about fifteen of the Wind Eaters to balance me in the scales.

Chief Ztwish-Ztwish received Bulger and me with the greatest kindness. I was at once presented to his ministers of state and to the members of his famiiy. Queen Phew-Yoo was a very stately dame, dignified and reserved in her manners; but the little princess Pouf-fâh charmed me with her childlike curiosity.

Their excellencies, the ministers of state, stood behind their master and seemed intent upon giving him far more advice than he was willing to listen to. Their names were Hiss-sah, Whirr-Whirr and Sh-Boom.

You may well imagine the excitement created in the home of chief Ztwish-Ztwish by my arrival. From the highest to the lowest, from chief to serving-man, everyone begged and implored to be allowed to feel of me.

Anxious to make a favorable impression upon the strange people so that I might have a good opportunity to study them at my ease, I submitted good-naturedly for an hour or more, to being patted, pinched, prodded, rubbed, and stroked.

It were vain for me to attempt to give you any idea of the thousand and one outcries of surprise, delight, wonder, fear, anxiety, and dread which went up from this multitude of strange beings, who were, although they didn't seem to think so, quite as great curiosities to me as I to them.

My stock of dried fruit was now quite exhausted and I began to feel the gnawings of hunger.

I was always blest with a splendid appetite and the pure bracing air of this island only added to it. Bulger, too, I could see, was casting inquiring glances about in search of some signs of kitchen arrangements. I made known to chief Ztwish-Ztwish, as well as I could, the state of affairs, and he at once summoned Hiss-sah, Whirr-Whirr and Sh-Boom to his side for a consultation.

They held a most animated discussion and one too, which ran from quarter hour to quarter hour without any sign of coming to an end.

All this time my poor stomach was wondering what had cut off the customary supplies.

Like rulers the world over, chief Ztwish-Ztwish was inpatient and self-willed. Finally he lost his temper completely and moved about so vigorously that his three ministers were kept continually on the bounce, so to speak.

If you can only wait long enough every thing comes to an end. I was finally bidden to approach the chief, who asked me whether I had, since my arrival on his island, seen anything which I could eat?

I was obliged to confess that I had not. Whereupon there was another consultation, which ended in Ztwish-Ztwish seizing his cork-wood club and sending each one of his ministers in a different direction, with three quick smart blows. The sight was so ludicrous that I would willingly have let my dinner go for a chance at the bat myself.

Suddenly an idea came to me. I could see that this settlement of the Wind Eaters was not far from the seashore. So, as best I could, I made chief Ztwish-Ztwish comprehend that I could eat the oysters and other shell fish, of which I had noticed vast quantities lying on the white sands of the ocean.

When the thing was made thoroughly plain to them that I proposed to satisfy my hunger by devouring such horrid and disgusting creatures as lived between these shells, I was really alarmed at the consternation it caused.

Queen Phew-yoo and and princess Pouf-fâh were taken ill and withdrew to their apartments in great haste, while one and all, even including the fierce Go-Whizz, were seized with symptoms of nausea. By degrees, however, they recovered and orders were issued to half a dozen serving-men who, not being gorged, were in good marching condition to set out for the shore, and bring a supply of the shell-fish to appease my hunger, which, by this time had really set its teeth in my vitals.

Meanwhile Bulger and I were conducted to a neat bamboo dwelling with an umbrella-shaped roof, and left to ourselves until the supply of food should arrive.

I was too hungry to sleep. And, Bulger, too, was in the same condition. But he was patience itself, as he always is, when he knows that his little master is suffering.

I threw myself down on a heap of dried rushes and my loving companion came and pillowed his head on my arm.

After a tedious wait of an hour or so a great outcry told me that something unusual had happened in the village of the Wind-Eaters.

It was the arrival of the serving-men bringing the supply of oysters.

I could hardly restrain myself until chief Ztwish-Ztwish should summon me to break my long fast.

When I reached the chief's quarters I found a vast crowd of people assembled to see the "Lump Man" put solid things down his throat.

Chief Ztwish-Ztwish and his court occupied front seats.

As you know by this time the voice of a Wind Eater depends upon the condition he is in. If he has just eaten and his body is rounded out like a well-filled balloon, his voice is deep and rumbling; if, on the other hand, he has not taken food for a day or so and his skin hangs in folds and wrinkles on his frame work of bones, he speaks with a soft, flute-like tone.

As I stepped to the front, followed by Bulger, and took my place beside the heap of oysters, a deafening outcry went up, in which the deep roars of the inflated Wind Eaters were mingled with the soft flute-like tones of the fasting ones. Not noticing any instrument at hand with which to pry the shells open I thoughtlessly drew my poniard from its sheath. In an instant a terrible panic seized upon the assembled multitude. Queen Phew-yoo and princess Pouf-fâh fell into a swoon. Chief Ztwish-Ztwish being in a fasting condition darted away to his apartments like a phantom. The ministers of state, Hiss-sah, Whirr-Whirr and Sh-Boom, being puffed up to their fullest capacity, struck the ground with their feet and rolled out of the way like huge footballs.

Quick as thought I sheathed my dagger, the sight of whose glittering point had brought about all this consternation; and, profiting by the lessons given me at our first meeting by Go-Whizz and his companions, I began a series of head-duckings and walking-beam motions of my body, which soon restored confidence in my peaceful intentions and brought my scattered

audience back to their seats. Go-Whizz, who had run the farthest, was now loudest in his boasts that he had not been the least frightened. Chief Ztwish-Ztwish resumed his seat with considerable nerve, but I noticed that he kept his eyes fastened on the place where I had hidden my dagger in my belt. Although the sight of the toothsome oysters only served to whet my appetite, yet was I now terribly perplexed to know how I should pry the shells open, for the laws of the land of the Wind-Eaters visited the death penalty upon any one found with a sharp-pointed instrument in his possession.

In earliest childhood the finger-nails are kept pared down to the flesh, until they lose their power to grow hard, and their place is taken by a piece of tough skin.

Teeth—the Wind-Eaters have none; or, more correctly speaking, their teeth do not grow above their gums. Nature seemed to have gradually ceased taking the trouble to supply these people with something for which they had absolutely no use.

You must bear in mind that these curious people had not always been satisfied with such thin diet. In ancient times—so chief Ztwish-Ztwish informed me, their ancestors had been fruit-eaters; the fruits, however, failing, they had been forced to have recourse to the gums which flowed from the trees, and as these gradually dried up, they made discovery that the various winds which blew across the island were filled with some invisible germs or particles, which had the power of sustaining life.

To resume: Observing a flint hatchet lying on the ground, I laid hold of it and set to work opening one of the largest oysters. A deep silence settled upon the assemblage. With a skilful twist, I wrenched the upper shell off, and, raising the lower one, upon which the fat and luscious creature lay unmindful of his impending fate, I opened my mouth and gracefully let the dainty morsel slip out of sight! A hundred cries of half horror, half wonder broke like a great chorus from the surrounding crowds of Wind Eaters. Again and again this outburst died away, only to break forth once more with redoubled vigor.

Many of the lookers-on were made so seriously ill by this—to them—most extraordinary spectacle, that they hastily left the place before I was able to take a second mouthful.

You may fancy how they felt. About as you would were I to begin gulping down bits of stone and iron.

Queen Phew-yoo clung timorously to her husband's arm; but the princess Pouf-fâh stepped boldly nearer to me, so that she might have a better view of the "little man solid all through." Again I raised one of the largest shells and let its occupant slip noiselessly down my throat, not forgetting each time to loosen the white muscle which held the shells together for Bulger's share of the feast.

Gradually the qualms of the Wind Eaters, at sight of a human being swallowing food in lumps, gave place to a devouring curiosity on their part to draw nearer and get a better view of my manner of satisfying hunger.

I could understand enough to know that many of the Wind Eaters had serious doubts that I really swallowed the oysters.

To them, I was little less than some sort of a sleight-of-hand man or doer of tricks.

The little princess Pouf-fâh mounted upon one of the benches, and the instant the oyster disappeared down my throat insisted upon my opening my mouth to its greatest width, in order that she might take a look for herself and see if the oyster were not hidden away under my tongue or in my cheek somewhere.

A sudden scream of terror startled the lookers-on as much as it did me.

The little princess was carried away in a swoon.

It was my teeth! They had frightened the gentle Pouf-fâh half to death.

For a moment all was confusion. Encouraged by Go-Whizz, many of the Wind Eaters seized their clubs and pressed forward with murderous intent. The reappearance of princess Pouf-fâh, bright and smiling, set everything right again.

Now the crowd was seized with unconquerable curiosity to draw near and take a look for themselves at the terrible thing which had thrown Pouf-fâh into a swoon.

My jaws soon began to ache from stretching my mouth wide enough open to give each one of them a glance at my double row of ivory cutters and grinders, and if I do say it myself, I had in those days one of the finest sets of teeth that ever cut their way through a slice of Nienburg biscuit, or ground up a piece of German roast goose.

From now on, these child-like and simple-minded people became pretty thoroughly convinced that the "Little Man Thick All Through" was a kind and peaceful creature and every way perfectly harmless.

The children flocked about me, and encouraged by my smiles and head-duckings soon made friends with me.

I was glad of this, for I was anxious to make a close study of the Wind Eaters young and old.

You may judge of my surprise when I saw a bevy of these children—animated puff-balls that they were—engaged in the to them, novel sport of rushing full tilt at me and bouncing off like rubber balls from a board fence.

Well, I suppose you are bursting with curiosity to hear something more definite about these strange people.

To me they were not entirely unknown. I had read here and there ancient books of travel by Arabian authors, of some such a race; whose bodies were so frail that they were unable to partake of any stronger and heavier food than the sweet gums which flowed from the trees and whose skins were so transparnt that they were called "glass-bodied," the beating of their little hearts being plainly visible to the eye of the beholder. I have no doubt that these authors referred to the dwellers of this wonderful island, on which no fruits, berries or edible roots were to be found, and whose ancestors, as I was informed by chief Ztwish-Ztwish, did, in former ages, thus sustain their lives. But I must confess that the fact that there were in existence human beings who literally lived upon air; or, more correctly speaking, upon winds laden with some invisible particles of life-sustaining matter, was a little more than I had ever dared to dream out, even in the most active workings of my imagination. You may judge then of my delight upon find-

ing myself among these extraordinary people, and upon discovering them to be such true children of nature, mild-mannered and peacefully-inclined.

And yet I was not long in making a discovery which proved to be quite an important one to me.

It was this. I learned that although the truth was as I have stated it, that the Wind Eaters are as a rule, a race of peace-loving creatures, gentle in their dispositions and averse to wrong-doing, yet there were exceptions to this general rule. Strange to say, it depended on what wind they fed upon.

All the women, for instance, were gentleness itself. They fed upon the soft zephyrs of the south. But the great majority of these people contented themselves with satisfying their hunger by resorting to the strong and wholesome west wind; while a goodly number, from some idea that it had a sweeter and more delicate flavor, a sort of heavy, nut-like taste, preferred the fitful, irregular east wind. It was however not considered wholesome diet by the best physicians of the nation and they contended that those who made a habit of feeding upon this wind were never as hale and hearty as those who restricted themselves entirely to the nutritious and bracing west wind.

A few there were—as in every land there are those who delight in strong, rich food, who insisted upon feeding on the rugged, gusty north-west wind, claiming that it was best suited to their wants, and that nature had intended man to partake of a wind powerful and strong-bodied, in order to fit them for the battle of life. There were even some—a very few, be it said to the honor of these mild-mannered and peace-loving people, who, contrary to the laws of the land and the express commands of chief Ztwish-Ztwish, welcomed the blowing of the angry whistling, boisterous north-wind, and drank in the dangerous fluid until their better natures were completely changed; and from being gentle, timorous and peace-loving, they became rough, and quarrelsome.

To this ilk belonged Captain Go-Whizz. In fact, as I was told by Whirr-Whirr, chief Ztwish-Ztwish himself showed signs of fear when he saw Go-Whizz come swaggering into the

village, his eyes inflamed, his steps unsteady, his speech indistinct after a heavy meal upon the rude and buffeting wind of the north. While in this condition Go-Whizz lost the slight control he had over himself and had, upon one occasion, so far forgotten himself as to breathe out threats and defiance against chief Ztwish-Ztwish, driving that ruler out of his own apartments, by advancing upon him with a bit of flint which he had ground to a dangerously sharp point.

Such were the curious people among whom I now found myself sojourning and on terms of pleasant intimacy with their ruler.

A few days after my arrival at the village of the Wind Eaters, I was, unfortunately the innocent cause of rather a grave accident, which, for a while had the effect of making me somewhat unpopular at the court of chief Ztwish-Ztwish.

It all came about in this way:

I've already told you how quick the children were to discover the solidity of my body and what delight they took in throwing themselves against me full tilt, in order to have the sport of bouncing off again like so many rubber balls.

Now you must keep in mind the fact that even after a hearty meal, a whole dozen of these babies weighed about one good pound.

I used to encourage them to play about me, in order the better to observe their curious tricks and ways, one of which was to lock arms and legs and thus form a chain of human links, one of which being fastened to a peak of the roof and the other possibly to some high staff or pole, at times even extending across the street and ending on the roof of the opposite dwelling. Thus festooned they spent hours swaying to and fro in the cool of the day, often swinging themselves to sleep. And it was not at all an unusual thing to see one of the mothers in search of her child come bustling along, halt, take down the line of living links, unhook her baby, replace the line and hurry away home.

While seated, one day, on the balcony of one of chief Ztwish-Ztwish's cottages, a dozen or more of the children set to work

to form such a chain, one end of it being fastened to one of my earrings which, like a good sailor, I took pleasure in wearing at times, and the other reaching nearly to the ground, passing over the high rail of the balcony.

Scrambling, pushing and squirming, uttering the queerest cries, shouts and squeals, these tiny Wind Eaters were half wild with joy, when suddenly one of those nearest me swung against the point of a needle which I had, doubtlessly, thrust into the lapel of my coat the last time I had been doing some mending, for, like a true sailor, I was skilled in the use of needle and thread.

I was aroused from my dreamy contemplation of these fantastic beings by a sharp crack like that made by the bursting of a toy balloon.

Again and again the same sharp noise rang in my ear.

A glance was sufficient to explain it all. I could feel my hair bristling up with horror as I saw the living links of this chain snap asunder, one after the other, and disappear into thin air. Exploded by coming into contact with the needle point, the force of the explosion of the first of these tiny puff-balls of humanity had been sufficient to burst the baby next in the line and so on to the end of the chain!

A dozen of them gone in less than as many seconds and not so much as a lock of hair to carry home to the heart broken mothers!

In a few moments, the news of the accident had spread to every quarter of the village. The weeping, shrieking mothers, howling for vengeance, gathered quickly about the dwelling into the interior of which Bulger and I had retreated.

Now you may believe me when I say, that I would not have stood in the least dread of an army of the Wind Eaters, when they were fully inflated after a hearty meal, but it so happened that the air had been calm for a day or so, and that many of them were now shrunken to the living skeleton size in which I had first met them. In this condition they were foes not to be despised, for, moving as they did, with almost lightning rapidity, their mode of fighting was to entangle their enemy in fine nets, woven of bamboo fibre and then beat them to death with their clubs.

True, these clubs were made of corkwood, and a score of them weighed less than a pound; yet, this fact would only make death slower and more painful; for, while a few blows might suffice to put one of their own kind out of his misery, it would, most surely, have required a whole day for them to beat the life out of such a solid enemy as I was.

Before I had chance to collect my thoughts, Go-Whizz was at the door with his band, their nets coiled to throw over me, while behind the net-throwers stood a row of club-bearers, anxiously awaiting their turn to begin proceedings. Thought I to myself: "This is serious business. If chief Ztwish-Ztwish is not at hand, they will entangle me in their nets and try to beat the life out of me before he returns, for they well know his affection for me." But, worse than all, was the fact that Go-Whizz had just returned from a distant part of the island, whither he and a few of his chums had made a secret journey, in order to gorge themselves on the rude and boisterous north-west wind. He was full of swagger and ire! I had never seen him swollen to such a size. His voice sounded like the deep bellowing of some fierce animal.

He whirled his net in the air, and called out in thundering tones for his men to follow him.

I felt now that the moment had arrived for me to make a desperate effort to save my life and Bulger's, too, for, with his four feet twisted up in one of their nets, he would fall an easy prey to Go-Whizz and his band. I felt, too, that it would be worse than useless to appeal to Go-Whizz for mercy, influenced, as he was, by long and deep draughts of the fierce and raging north-west gale.

There he stood, puffing, blowing, blustering, swaggering, as round and round his head he swung the fatal web, which, the moment I should attempt to take my back from the wall, he intended to cast over me as a fowler would entrap a bird.

Suddenly I bethought myself of the little instrument which had brought me to this dangerous strait.

Before drawing it, however, from its hiding-place, I determined to play the bully and swagger a little myself.

Now, the heaviest Wind Eater weighs about six pounds; and, as you may imagine, my weight, nearly a hundred pounds, was a source of great dread to them. They stood in constant fear that I might accidentally tread upon one of the toes of a Wind Eater and explode him.

Before they would allow me to venture out upon one of their balconies, or to inhabit an upper story of one of their dwellings, they proceeded to strengthen it with the stoutest bamboo poles they could find. So, I now began to give the valiant Go-Whizz a few gentle reminders of my weight and solidity.

Leaping high into the air, I landed upon the bamboo flooring with such a thump that everything creaked and trembled.

At first there was a general stampede of Go-Whizz's followers, and that blustering leader was the only one left to face Bulger and me.

He stood his ground pretty bravely, although I could see that he was half inclined to heed the cries of his men and make his way out of the dwelling before I succeeded in wrecking it. But, after a few more of my jumps, seeing that the flooring withstood all my efforts to break it down, Go-Whizz succeeded in rallying his band.

Again, and now more furious than ever, they surrounded us, shrieking and howling like mad, their uplifted right hands bearing the dangerous nets, with which they hoped to entangle Bulger and me, and then dispatch us.

Now, it was high time for me to fall back on my reserves.

I did so. The effect was simply astounding. The needle proved to be one of the kind used for darning; very long and bright, and exceedingly sharp-pointed. My dagger point was bad enough. It had thrown them into a wild and panicky fear. But, this little instrument, as I brandished it in front of them, threw them into fits of rigid terror.

They stood rooted to the ground, their bulging eyes riveted upon the needle-point as if they, one and all, expected it to prick them to death if they stirred an inch.

At last, making a mighty effort, Go-Whizz broke away from the spot, uttering a deep and rumbling cry of horror, his men

rolling after him, in the wildest terror. When they saw the tumultuous manner in which the valiant Go-Whizz and his followers retreated from my presence, the assembled men and women, with frightful cries, took to their heels as if a legion of demons were pursuing them.

In a few moments Bulger and I stood alone on the battle field. He had not budged from my side during the time that death threatened me.

"Come!" said I, as I stooped and stroked his head. "Come, thou faithful friend and companion, let us go to chief Ztwish-Ztwish and lay the matter before him!"

The chief had just awoke from a noonday nap. He had calmly slept through the whole conflict, and so it was necessary for me to give him a full account of the unfortunate accident which resulted in exploding an entire string of babies, and of Go-Whizz's attempt to slay me. He listened with great calmness and most patiently too. He then begged to be excused for a few moments as an attendant had just informed him that a very soft and sweet south wind had begun to blow.

He stepped out on the balcony; and after he had taken about a dozen mouthfuls of the pure, refreshing breeze, returned looking a little plumper and, like all men after enjoying a meal of favorite food, was still more amiable and kindly in his manner than before.

The news that a dozen of the smallest subjects had been so unceremoniously popped out of existence didn't seem to worry him very much. What moved him most of all, was the fact which, apparently, up to that hour had never entered into his mind, namely, that a point so fine, so delicate, so deadly, so nearly invisible, could be created by the hand of man!

I assured him that it was that very moment hidden in the stuff of my garb, right in front of his eyes.

He trembled.

I strove to reassure him, by explaining to him that I would as soon think of plunging my poniard into my own heart as of turning this almost invisible and yet deadly point against his life.

He tried to smile, but it ended in a shudder.

"Thinkest thou, little man thick-all-through," asked chief Ztwish-Ztwish with a trembling tongue, "that I may look upon it and not fall into a swoon?"

"O, most assuredly, great chief:" was my reply. "In fact, most light and buoyant Ztwish-Ztwish," I continued, "I can rob this dreaded instrument of all its power to injure thee and place it in thy hand like any harmless bit of wood. Is it thy will that I should thus deliver to thee this dreaded point?"

With a slight shiver, chief Ztwish-Ztwish made answer:

"Ay, great and learned little master, I think I can bear the sight of it now. I am, indeed, very brave, but thou knowest a single prick of that deadly point would instantly end the life of the sturdiest Wind Eater."

I again assured him that there was really nothing to dread so long as he followed my directions. So saying I drew the darning needle from its hiding place.

Chief Ztwish-Ztwish closed his eyes at first, but gradually grew bold enough to gaze upon the glittering point.

Stooping down I picked up one of the cork clubs and breaking off a bit of the smaller end thrust the needle point into it.

Chief Ztwish-Ztwish watched my movements with a sort of painful curiosity.

"There, great chief of the Wind Eaters," I exclaimed, "now thou mayest toy with it, hide it in the rushes of thy bed, it cannot injure thee! It is as harmless as a pebble rounded by the sportive, sparkling waters of one of thy mountain brooks. Take it! it may serve thee some day, in case of a sudden attack upon thy illustrious person."

"At such a moment, fear naught! seize it firmly, draw its dreaded point from its hiding place in this bit of cork. So small is it that it will be invisible in thy hand, and while thine enemy stands before thee in fancied safety, pierce him to death; for, thou are ruler and it is fitting that death should strike him who attempts to rob thy people of their chief!"

Chief Ztwish-Ztwish took the needle with trembling hand. and hid the bit of cork which held it under the thatch of the

roof. Then, calling out, he summoned one of his serving-men and bade him bring from a neighboring apartment a certain small bamboo chest, from which he drew a string of rare jewels somewhat of the nature of amber, only a thousand times more brilliant. With this beautiful gift he dismissed me, issuing orders to his ministers that no harm should be allowed to come to me for the accident which exploded the string of little Wind Eaters.

Go-Whizz could with difficulty hide his anger at seeing me once more an honored guest at the court of chief Ztwish-Ztwish.

I did not relax my vigilance in the least, however. Every night I barred the windows with my own hands, and placed Bulger's mat of rushes in front of the door, so that it would be impossible for the wrathful leader to surprise me.

Now that the explosion of the babies was quite forgotten, my sojourn among the Wind Eaters would have continued to be extremely pleasant, had not a new difficulty arisen to cause me anxiety.

The rather thin diet upon which I had been existing, since my arrival among these curious people, while it appeased my hunger, robbed me of that plump and well-fed look which I had always had, I found myself losing flesh at an alarming rate. Chief Ztwish-Ztwish and queen Phew-Yoo were delighted, for as they expressed it, "the little man thick-all-through was rapidly becoming in appearance at least, a genuine Wind Eater."

Bulger, too, fell away dreadfully.

Now and then I surprised him with his dark, lustrous eyes fixed upon me with as much as to say: "O, little master, what is the matter with us? We eat, and yet we grow thin. Are we really turning to Wind Eaters?"

And another bad phase of the matter was, that while my ever-increasing leanness was causing me so much anxiety, it was carrying joy to the heart of queen Phew-yoo who, it seems, had formed the plan of keeping me for the rest of my life in the service of her lord and master by bestowing upon me the hand of the fair princess Pouf-fâh.

Queen Phew-yoo's explanation of my ever-increasing thinness was, that it was the effect of the wonderful atmosphere of their island; that it mattered very little how thick and solid a man might be, if he lived long enough among them, he would gradually lose it and become, if not a genuine Wind Eater, at least almost as light and airy a being as they were.

As I learned of these views from others before hearing them from the queen's own lips, it was not at all a surprise for me, one day to receive a message from the stately Phew-yoo summoning me to present myself before her.

She accorded me a very gracious reception, and princess Pouf-fâh too, showed great delight at seeing me under her mother's roof. She bounced hither and thither like a toy balloon, now shaking perfume from dried flowers, now holding up strings of the curious gems, which I have already mentioned, and making them glisten in front of my face.

I amused her by holding her out on the palm of my hand and tossing her up and catching her, as I would a rubber ball.

Queen Phew-yoo looked on in mute satisfaction.

When Princess Pouf-fâh had grown weary of play, the queen spoke as follows:

"O, little man thick-all-through, I have to say to thee that which will gladden thy heart. The great chief, my husband, and I have noticed with joy that day by day thou art growing thinner and thinner. Know then, that this is the magical effect of the air thou breathest. When our forefathers landed on this island, they, like thee were solid all through. Therefore, be not alarmed when, a few months hence, thou findest thyself completely changed. Thou wilt, ere long, lose this heavy load of useless flesh, which thou hast been for so long a time condemned to carry about with thee, and become light and buoyant, like us. And, O beloved Lump, that thou mayest hasten the change from thy present solid form and become a graceful and hollow being like one of us, I do, with the chief Ztwish-Ztwish's counsel and consent, accord thee permission to eat with us each day. This very hour shalt thou make thy first meal upon the sweet and wholesome wind of the

South. The very moment, little Chunk, that thou hast become thin enough to suit the great chief, he will give thee the fair princess Pouf-fâh for thy wife."

At these words, the princess, who really seemed to be very fond of me, clapped her hands joyfully, and bounced between her mother and me like a toy football.

"But, little Man-Lump," continued queen Phew-yoo, "before we set out to dine on the sweet wind which blows over Banquet Hill, there are two things which the great chief Ztwish-Ztwish said I must be very particular to mention to you, the two conditions upon which he is willing to honor you above all men, by bestowing the hand of the beautiful princess Pouf-fâh upon thee."

"Name them, gracious queen!" I cried, for I was too wise to raise any objections at this point. I knew only too well that a single word from chief Ztwish-Ztwish would hand me over to the tender mercies of the fierce Go-Whizz.

"They are," resumed queen Phew-yoo, puffing out her cheeks and tapping them playfully with the backs of her thumbs, "they are, little man thick-all-through, that thou shalt file thy teeth down even with thy gums and keep thy nails always pared down to the flesh."

"It shall be, gracious queen, as thou desirest," I replied, with several low bendings of my body.

"Then," answered queen Phew-yoo gayly, "there remains nothing for thee to do but to begin at once to accustom thyself to our food; so let us set out for Banquet Hill without delay, for the sweet south wind is blowing fresh and strong!"

I accompanied queen Phew-yoo and princess Pouf-fâh to the place indicated. It was a beautiful knoll, from which I could look far away to southward over a valley, enchantingly fair.

She and the princess at once began to inhale the soft, sweet air, and encouraged me to do the same.

They were delighted with my efforts. In fact, the motherly Phew-yoo seemed a little bit anxious lest I should overeat myself.

After the princess had taken a few deep draughts, I was surprised to see an attendant approach her and place about her throat a necklace of beads, strung upon an elastic cord. This was a precaution to prevent the princess from eating too heartily, were she so inclined. Well, as you may imagine, I returned to my apartments from dining with queen Phew-yoo and princess Pouf-fâh on Banquet Hill a very hungry man; if that were possible, hungrier than I was before, for the pure, fresh air and many deep breaths had fairly made me ravenous.

Once more alone with Bulger, I set to work thinking out some scheme to get hold of more food; and, by checking my alarming loss of flesh, put an end to queen Phew-yoo's plan of transforming me into a genuine Wind Eater and giving me the princess Pouf-fâh for a wife.

It occurred to me that possibly I might catch some fish in one of the arms of the sea nearest to the village and broil it on live embers, for I had my tinder box in my pocket.

This plan worked to a charm. I soon succeeded in teaching several of the serving-men to rig up a number of their war-nets as a sort of seine, and was overjoyed the first time I cast it to make a haul of a dozen or more fine sea-bass.

Bulger entered into the sport with great zeal, seizing a rope in his mouth and tugging away for dear life, as we began to haul in.

The next thing was to gather some dry leaves and wood, and start a suitable fire to make a bed of embers. Crowds of the Wind Eaters gathered about me and watched my movements with a sort of mixture of wonder, fear and pleasure.

When at last the smoke began to curl up, and the flame showed itself, cries of consternation broke forth, and a wild stampede ensued.

Chief Ztwish-Ztwish was hastily summoned; but, I had no difficulty in convincing him that I intended no injury to anyone, that the red tongues which he saw darting forth were perfectly harmless if they did not come in contact with one's flesh; that it would only be necessary for him to issue a command for-

bidding the people to approach too near to the tongues of crimson which darted from the black clouds of smoke.

By the time the live embers had formed I was ready with a dressed sea-bass of about two pounds' weight, and the cooking began.

It is needless for me to assure you that Bulger and I sat down to a delightful meal, really the first satisfactory one since my arrival among the Wind Eaters.

From this time on all went well. Every day my oyster gatherers and my fishermen made their visit to the shore to keep my larder supplied. Upon their return, I was always in readiness with a fine bed of embers. So things went on for a week or so. I was delighted to find Bulger and myself gaining flesh in splendid style. And still, every now and then I was obliged to accept queen Phew-yoo's invitation to dine with her and the princess Pouf-fâh at Banquet Hill, where I pretended to enjoy a meal on the soft and perfumed south wind quite as much as they did themselves. Queen Phew-yoo insisted that my complextion was growing clearer and more transparent every day, and that, beyond all doubt, in a few months I would be able entirely to give up a "swallowing stones" as she called it.

While I was quietly pursuing my studies of these curious people, another unfortunate occurrence took place, and this time it turned out to be a very grave and serious matter.

The Wind Eaters were not long in getting accustomed to the, to them, at first, startling sight of "crimson tongues darting from the mouths of black clouds." In fact, they soon learned to like the odor of the delicate morsels as they lay broiling on the embers, and when the air was chilly, didn't hesitate to form a circle around Bulger and me as we sat eating our dinner and enjoy the warmth, and to them, curious spectacle at the same time. It so happened that one evening, I had left a deeper bed of embers than I had imagined. The ashes collected over them and they continued to glow till nightfall. A band of roysterers belonging to the Go-Whizz faction, by the merest chance, returned homeward that night from a trip to the north shore of the island, where they had gorged themselves upon the bois-

CAPTAIN GO-WHIZZ AND HIS LIEUTENANT THREATEN THE LITTLE BARON

terous wind of that quarter. Attracted by the glow of the remaining embers, they made haste to gather a lot of wood, threw it upon the smoldering fire, and, as the flames began to thrust out their red tongues here and there, ranged themselves in a circle to enjoy the warmth, for the night was damp and chilly.

So pleasant did they find the effects of the warmth that they resolved to pass the night there and threw themselves down on the ground as close to the fire as they deemed it prudent to go.

About midnight a gentle scratching on my arm from Bulger's paw, told me that something unusual had happened, for he never awakened me unless he was quite sure that the matter was serious enough to warrant him in disturbing me.

I found the village in the wildest state of alarm. Ear-piercing screams from the women mingled with the deep rumbling outcries of the men.

You have no doubt, already guessed what had happened. The facts were simply these: In the night, the cold had increased, and several of the Wind Eaters, half asleep, and half stupefied by the deep draughts of the boisterous north-west wind, had approached closer and closer to the fire, when suddenly the vast quantity of cold air which they had swallowed began to expand and four of them exploded with a terrific noise.

In quicker time than it takes to tell it, my dwelling was surrounded by a screaming, shrieking, howling mob ot Wind Eaters, demanding my instant death.

It required all of chief Ztwish-Ztwish's influence with his people to save me from being entangled in their fatal nets and beaten to death on the spot.

To make matters a thousand times worse, the bully and swaggerer, Go-Whizz, entered the village at this very moment, with a pack of his quarrelsome hangers-on at his heels. He had been away on a secret trip to the farthest northern point of the island, where the north wind howls and roars its maddest. I had never seen him puffed up so to the very bursting point with his favorite food.

When he heard of the fate which had overtaken his four

comrades, his fury knew no bounds. He and his followers pounded their chests until the air quivered with deep and rumbling sounds, while ever and anon they broke out into the wildest lamentations for their dead companions. He openly and boldly charged chief Ztwish-Ztwish with having betrayed his people and given over their once happy island to certain ruin at the hands of the "little monster thick-all-through," who, by his dread magic and foul mysteries, would soon bring their people to feed upon stones like himself.

Day now began to break; and with the coming light, the confusion in the village seemed to take on new strength. So sure was I that death was about to strike me that I wrote out several messages to the elder baron and to the gentle baroness, my mother, on the leaves of my note-book, and left directions with one of the chief's serving-men that, in case of my death, it was my wish that he should send them to my people, whom he would find on my ship in the beautiful bay on the distant shore of the island.

I said nothing about Bulger, for I knew only too well that he would die by my side.

I prepared for the worst. I examined the primings of my pocket-pistols, and concealed my dagger under my coat at the back of my neck, where I would be better able to reach it, if it came to close quarters.

This done, I proceeded to cut my finger-nails to as sharp points as I could, for I was determined to sell my life as dearly as possible.

While I felt confident of chief Ztwish-Ztwish's affection for me, yet I couldn't tell at what moment he might lose courage and turn me over to the mob, in order to save himself.

Bulger watched all my preparations with wide-opened and intelligent eyes, occasionally giving utterance to a low, nervous whine, as the howling, shrieking, roaring mob surged back and forth in front of chief Ztwish-Ztwish's dwelling.

By the law of the land, the common people were prohibited from entering the inner enclosure of the chief's abode, but Go-Whizz, being one of the nobles or minor chiefs, was

entitled to advance into the chief's presence and state his wrongs or make his requests.

So now, the raging Go-Whizz, parting from his followers, who never ceased crying out for vengeance upon the "little demon Lump," who, on two different occasions, had spread death and destruction among their people, strode into the presence of chief Ztwish-Ztwish.

The chief was calm. He had not partaken of food for four and twenty hours, and stood up, wrinkled, creased and seamed, as the Wind Eaters always look when fasting. Near him sat queen Phew-yoo and princess Pouf-fâh, while directly behind him were ranged his three councillors, Hiss-sah, Whirr-Whirr, and Sh-Boom. They were well-rounded out by recent draughts of the strong and wholesome west wind, and hence, looked as contented and smiling as Ztwish-Ztwish looked sad and solemn. I stood in an adjoining apartment, concealed behind a bamboo screen, with my faithful Bulger by my side. I was so placed that I could see all, without being seen myself. Chief Ztwish-Ztwish knew of my presence there.

As Bulger caught a glimpse of the raging and bellowing Go-Whizz, he grew so nervous that I was obliged to stoop and stroke his head to let him know I feared nothing. But the fact of the matter is, great dangers always exert a subduing influence upon me.

I face them cooly, but sadly, for my thoughts in such moments go back to the elder baron and to the gentle baroness, my mother, in the far-away home 'neath the skies of the beloved fatherland.

Like a huge football impelled by the kick of some gigantic foot, Go-Whizz landed in the audience chamber of chief Ztwish-Ztwish. He shook his arms violently, and bounded up and down with inward fury, for he was still too much beside himself with rage to utter any other sound than a deep rumbling growl or mutter.

From my place behind the bamboo screen I followed, with all the keenness of sight for which I am so justly famous, every movement of the furious Go-Whizz, as well as the actions

and demeanor of chief Ztwish-Ztwish and of his councillors, for I was determined not to be caught napping in case any signs of treachery should be visible. At the very first glance I saw that the rebellious Go-Whizz had something hidden in his girdle, and from the shape and length I knew at once that it was a flint knife. Quick as thought, I beckoned a serving man to my side and sent a message to the chief, telling the attendant to appear to be engaged in waving the branches of perfumed leaves as was his duty while he whispered it in the chief's ear.

It was as follows:

"Be on thy guard! O, Chief. The brawler hath a flint knife hidden in his girdle. He will attempt to slay thee. Be careful! Be calm!"

Go-Whizz had now quieted down a little; but, with a voice of thunder, he began his tirade. He pictured the long years of peace and happiness on their island, the blessings they had enjoyed under the long and glorious line of rulers of which Ztwish-Ztwish was the worthy descendant. He thundered out defiance against all the enemies of the Wind Eaters and as softly as possible roared his own praises telling of the many deeds of valor he had performed in Ztwish-Ztwish's service and ended by declaring himself ready and willing to die for his beloved chief.

When Go-Whizz had spoken, the chief bowed his head for a few moments in silence and then made answer: "Thou hast spoken truly and wisely, O Go-Whizz! Thou art brave. Thou hast the right to demand favor at my hands! Speak, Go-Whizz, what may Ztwish-Ztwish do for thee?"

At these words of Ztwish-Ztwish, all the former fury of Go-Whizz broke forth once more. Pounding his chest and striding up and down the audience chamber, he roared out:

"That thou givest into my hands this very hour, the 'Solid Demon,' the dreaded 'Man-Lump,' the monster 'Thick-All-Through' who hath brought all this death and ruin into our peaceful land!"

Chief Ztwish-Ztwish was silent for a few moments.

Need I tell you that my very heart listened for the reply?

I could hear nothing but the deep, coarse, grating sound of Go-Whizz's breath as I leaned forward to catch the first word which should fall from the chief's lips.

It seemed a lifetime. At length Ztwish-Ztwish spoke:

"My brother, thou art inflamed with the deep draughts of the fierce and raging north wind! Thou art beside thyself. Thou seest not clearly! I must not adjudge death except when the decree will rest on the laws of our fathers. True, the 'Little Man-Thick-All-Through' hath been the cause of great misfortune to our people, but the innocent cause. He hath not striven or desired to harm us. He is a lover of peace, a friend of his kind. My followers were warned of the danger of the crimson tongues. The 'Man Lump' did not seek their death. And full well too, thou knowest that the laws of our fathers bid us to hold the lives of our guests as sacred as the texture of our skin. Go thy way, therefore, Go-Whizz, I cannot doom the 'Man Lump' to death.

"Is this," roared the disappointed leader, "the kind of justice which thou givest to my people?"

"Ay, is it, thou brawler!" replied chief Ztwish-Ztwish, now fast losing control over himself. "Hold thy peace and depart, lest in my wrath at thy frequent wrong doing I give thee over to merited punishment!"

"Have a care, Ztwish-Ztwish!" roared Go-Whizz, boiling over with rage, "have a care lest thy people rise in their might and cast thee out, thou unjust ruler!"

"Begone, I say!" was Ztwish-Ztwish's calm but stern reply.

"Go thou first, then, traitor to thy people! thundered out Go-Whizz, springing forward with the flint knife raised high in the air.

Cries of terror burst from those gathered in the audience chamber. But chief Ztwish-Ztwish calmly put forth his hand and touched the would-be assassin.

With a deafening crack the body of the raging Go-Whizz flew into a thousand pieces, like a huge balloon seized by the hands of the tempest and whirled against the spear-like branches of some shattered oaken monarch of the plain.

Queen Phew-yoo and princess Pouf-fâh, bewildered and terror-stricken, clung to each other, while silent fear sat on the faces of those around the chief. But he was calm, and spoke a few words in a mild and steady voice to the queen and the princess.

When the people learned of Go-Whizz's attempt to slay their ruler and how the brawler, at the very instant he lifted the flint knife to strike, had been mysteriously stricken dead at Ztwish-Ztwish's feet, they sent up loud huzzas, for the fierce Go-Whizz was more feared than loved, even by his followers.

It required several days for the village of the Wind Eaters to quiet down and take on its every-day look, after the mysterious death of Go-Whizz; but, with his disappearance vanished all opposition to chief Ztwish-Ztwish's rule.

The people firmly believed that it was the avenging spirits of the air who had touched the brawler with their sword points when he raised his hand against their ruler.

I need hardly tell you that the chief's gratitude to me knew no bounds. No gifts were too beautiful or too costly to be offered me. And the fact that I declined them all, only seemed to strengthen his affection for me.

But how could I, how dared I reject the gift of the hand of the fair princess Pouf-fâh?

To do this would be to undo all that I have done, to make Ztwish-Ztwish my enemy, to transform his love into hate, his confidence into suspicion—possibly to write my own death warrant.

There was but one course left for me to pursue. And that was escape!

And escape, too, it must be at once, before I had lost the chief's confidence. One of Ztwish-Ztwish's first acts after his rescue from the flint knife of the murderous Go-Whizz, was to restore to me the tiny instrument with the invisible point.

This done, a terrible load seemed to be lifted from his mind. He became himself again. And with his returning happiness and content, came a still stronger desire to hasten my marriage with the princess Pouf-fâh.

With the greatest caution, I made this and that excuse, in order to gain time to collect my thoughts and settle upon some sure plan of escape, for recapture I knew meant death, or worse than death—imprisonment until I should consent to give up all desire to leave the island of the Wind Eaters, and pledge myself to become, so far as nature would permit, one of their people.

Cautious as I was, my excuses awakened suspicion.

The first proof of this was to find that orders had been given to cut off my supply of fish.

Queen Phew-yoo was afraid that so long as I was permitted to have all the solid food I wanted, I would not grow thin enough to be content with air diet, and, therefore, not satisfied to make my home among them for the rest of my life.

The next thing to happen to me was to find my supply of oysters and mussels reduced one-half by orders of Phew-yoo. This meant yield or starve!

It struck me like a bolt out of a clear sky!

But it has always been just such blows as this which have, throughout my life, aroused me to calm, quick, intelligent action.

I hesitated no longer. My plan reached perfection in a single moment. When night-fall came I hastily scrawled a few lines addressed to my sailing-master, telling him of the fate which threatened to overtake me and bidding him arm a few trusty men and hasten to my rescue. This I tied to the collar of my loved and faithful Bulger. He covered my hand with carresses and I held him clasped in my arms for an instant while the tears fell hot and fast. Then I softly opened the door of my bamboo lodge.

The night was bright and glorious. "Away, my beloved Bulger!" I whispered, stooping and pressing my lips for the last time on his silken ears and shapely head. "To the ship! Away!" He paused, looked into my face, gave a low whine as if to say: "Ay, ay, little master, I understand!" And away he sprang like the wind. For an instant I could follow him as with a long and sturdy bound he sped along! And then he was gone!

The next morning, to my utter astonishment, I was informed that all the preparations for the marriage of the princess Pouf-fâh and the "little man thick-all-through," were completed and that the feasting and merrymaking would begin the day following.

This piece of news, startling as it was, I received with perfect calmness. I completely disarmed all suspicion by my apparent satisfaction with the bright prospect of becoming the son-in-law of the great chief Ztwish-Ztwish. I searched my pockets for trinkets to bestow upon the light and airy Pouf-fâh

Queen Phew-yoo was not visible. So great had been the joy of her mother's heart that in a moment of weakness she had partaken too greedily of the rich, but unwholsome east wind and was now suffering from a fearful attack of dyspepsia.

This was a most fortunate thing for me, for I am quite certain that queen Phew-yoo would never have consented to allow me to return to my own apartments that night. There was now but one thing left for me to do and that was to make for the distant sea-coast, where I had left my ship and crew.

And start, too, that very night. As ill luck would have it, chief Ztwish-Ztwish, noticing that a delightfully strong west wind had begun to blow insisted upon having a sort of preliminary feast about sundown.

I was invited to join the party.

Not daring to refuse, I set out with the merry-makers and not only tired myself out by making frantic efforts to fill myself with their invisible food but it was nearly mid-night before the village grew perfectly quiet and everybody seemed to have closed the doors and windows of his dwelling. But, after all, the rioting of the Wind Eaters was a fortunate thing for me. They went to bed so gorged with many and deep draugths of the hearty and filling west wind, that they slept like logs, if you will allow me to compare puffballs to solid wood.

I waited until the rumbling of the voices had died away as the last group of roysterers broke up and the solitary Wind Eaters, scattered along the streets, disappeared one by one into their bamboo dwellings.

Leaving my door fastened on the inside, I sprang lightly through the window, and under cover of the deep shadows made my way unnoticed to the outskirts of the town. Here I broke into a sharp run, for at very most I would have but six hours' start of the Wind Eaters and that was far too little; for, as I have already told you, they flit along like phantoms when in a fasting condition, and even when pretty well filled, are very swift of foot—more especially if the air be quiet so as not to impede their advance.

On, on, I sped with a desperate resolve to make such a good use of my start as to make it impossible for them to overtake me.

To my horror, after about an hour's run I noticed that my legs were beginning to tire.

This was a terrible blow to me. For a few moments I staggered along half unconscious of where I was, whither I was hastening and of the awful danger threatening me. All at once the truth of the matter broke upon me.

I was but the wreck of my former self. The long months of fish diet had robbed my muscles of that wonderful strength and elasticity which was once my pride and my chief dependence in moments of peril.

Frail as I had grown, my legs now bent beneath me.

Slower and slower grew my pace. My heart seemed to swell and shut out the very breath of life.

On, ever onward, I toiled with a desperate effort to escape my pursuers, whose rumbling voices it half seemed to me were faintly booming in the distance.

But Nature would do no more!

I reeled, I staggered, I stopped, I fell!

How long I lay there I know not. But when I came to myself, I could plainly feel that change in the air which tells of the coming day. The rippling of a brook fell on my ear. I dragged my aching body in the direction the sound came from. A deep pull at the cool, clear water of the brook refreshed me somewhat. I attempted to rise; but, O, new loss of hope—to discover that my joints had stiffened while sleeping on the ground, uncovered, yes, even ill-clad, for I had left one piece

of my clothing hanging on the window-sill of my lodge in the village, to quiet any suspicion which might arise in the minds of the serving-men.

Thoughts of home, however, of the elder baron, of the gentle baroness, my mother, of my loved Bulger, flitted through my fevered brain, and prompted me to make one more effort to regain my feet and escape death at the hands of chief Ztwish-Ztwish's enraged people, who would soon be bounding along, up hill and down dale, like spirits of the wind, as they were.

A groan escaped my lips as I rose to my feet, so like knife-points in my joints were the pains which shot through my frame.

But I must try to be up and away, even though the effort cost me a thousand agonizing twinges.

I owe it to the loved ones at home to push on till I fall utterly broken, till, like a stricken beast, robbed of the power to stand, I should topple and fall at the feet and at the mercy of my pursuers.

Such were the thoughts which oppressed my poor, reeling brain.

A terrible mystery, a torturing dream weighed me down.

I still had my mind. I could see. I could feel. I could hear. And why should I not rise and move onward, and away from the certain death which hovered over me?

Crazed by such thoughts, I struggled to my feet and staggered along, sending forth a groan with every step!

But I had steeled myself to the task, and dragged myself along, still oppressed by some strange and mysterious power, which gave to every pebble the rock's size, and widened every gully to a yawning chasm, on the brink of which I paused in sickening fear of plunging into some black abyss. And yet, oh joy! gradually the films faded from my eyes, the mysterious power lifted its spell from my brain. I felt more like myself.

I saw clearer. My step grew firmer. Now, at last, thought I, all is going well!

When, suddenly, a long, blue-gray streak of light flashed along over the heads of the hills in the far distant eastern sky. It was the signal of morning!

Again, with a groan I sank on my knees, caught myself, rose half-dazed, pressed on again, slowly, slowly, every step jarring on my heated brain like a hammer's blow; but still onward, onward!

A terrible grip as of some giant hand—palm of iron and fingers of steel—set itself on my very vitals. The thought that even now my escape was known to my enemies, that the phantom Wind Eaters, armed with their nets and clubs, were flitting out of the streets of chief Ztwish-Ztwish's village, charged to carry me back alive to a worse death than death itself, or slay me for having broken faith and set the face of honesty over my fraud and deceit, seemed to paralyze my limbs and rob me of the little strength I had left.

Still on and ever onward I struggled, like one in the dull stupor of the wine cup. Fast! ah, too fast that streak of gray dawn lengthened and widened and the orb of day shot up through the morning shadows a messenger of light here and there, now weak and fitful, now stronger and farther reaching.

I saw them, ay, I felt them, for in my dread of them they seemed to flash toward me and strike my half closed eyes, as if knocking at the windows of my soul and rousing me to move out of death's harm.

For a brief moment I halted as if expecting some fond, familiar voice to ring in my ears.

It came.

It was the gentle baroness, my mother! Gently, softly, sweetly, that well-known voice came floating on the morning air bidding me take heart, calling me by name just as in childhood's days, and saying: "My baby! my boy! my son! my darling! Rouse thee! Press on! Press on quickly!" And then I took heart.

The fearful clamp set on my breast relaxed its hold.

I could feel my strength returning. But oh, so slowly, so slowly! Still, it was on its way back at last! I could feel my feet grow lighter. With some effort I quickened my pace almost to a run.

On, on, I sped, now every instant giving me new strength,

every motion sending the warm blood tingling to my fingers' ends.

The spell had been lifted! I was myself again!

Swifter, and swifter my pace quickened until I flew along as in days of old, when with ease I left all comers far behind me!

Methought I could almost hear the plash of the waves on the snow-white sands of that beautiful harbor where my good ship lay.

On, and ever onward, I sped with a new and mysterious strength. I was astounded at my own deeds. I was almost afraid, so fast I was bounding along, lest again some demon of the air should touch my limbs and stay my course.

But hark! Didn't you hear that deep rumble?

The sky is clear. It cannot have been the voice of the storm fiend.

Ha! again, deeper and clearer than before, that hoarse, low, muttering rumble, half-roar, half-growl comes borne along on the wings of the awakened breeze.

Lost! Lost! Lost!

It is the cry of the pursuers, it is the voice of the enemy!

Those children of the air are on my track. They follow me with leap and jump. What madness to think to outrun them. Let me halt and die like a man! Look how they bound along over the plain!

Swift and noiseless are their steps, phantoms that they are!

I halt. I turn. I grasp my fire-arm! Too late! A score of entangling nets envelope me! I struggle only to entwine myself the more, arms, hands, legs, feet, are twisted in wretched confusion.

I sway, fall, roll over, wrapped 'round and 'round in that dreadful tangle!

And now down upon my defenceless body comes a rain of sharp, stinging blows. Deep rumbling cries fill the air and keep time in a wild way with the showers of blows rained on my face and head and hands.

As they continue they seem to increase in strength.

The pain, bearable at first, now becomes excruciating.

The light goes out of my eyes, swollen shut as they are beneath this cruel pelting.

A thousand ringing sounds assail my ears.

My brain reels—I am going—going—dying—

When, hark again!

You can not hear it! Your ears would not know it! But mine do! Mine do!

'Tis Bulger's bark and I am saved! Faster and faster the Wind Eaters ply their clubs.

I do not heed them. I do not feel them now, for nearer and nearer comes that joyous music.

'Tis here!

I'm strong again. I rise half up—my lips move—I speak—I cry out: "Quick, good Bulger, or all is lost!" A single glance at the terrible plight of his little master tells him all. With a howl of rage, his dark eyes shooting flame, he throws himself upon the heels of the Wind Eaters. His sharp teeth pierce like needles!

Crack!

Again and again he sends his fangs through the skin of a Wind Eater.

Crack! Crack!

Their clubs cease swinging. A cry of horror goes up, as for the fourth time good Bulger's teeth pierces the heel of a Wind Eater and sends his body with a loud report to vanish into thin air.

They turn; they break away in wild dismay; they fly for their lives, casting away their clubs and abandoning their victim. I could see no more.

It grew black, a vertigo seized me. I tried to free my hands to touch my loved Bulger, for death, I thought, had come!

* * * * * * * * * *

When life came back Bulger was licking my hands and face and whining piteously. He had gnawed the netting free from the limbs of his little master.

With a cry of joy and a brust of tears, I caught that faithful, loving creature to my breast.

At that instant, distant shouts came floating over the hills. They came from my sailing-master and his relief party.

I could not answer. But Bulger raised his head and sent forth a few sharp barks to tell them where we were.

In a short half hour they were at my side.

AS I APPEARED THE DAY AFTER MY RESCUE BY BULGER.

After my bruised face and hands had been bathed in cool water and I had swallowed a few mouthfuls of wine, I felt strong enough to get on my feet and move slowly forward.

Bulger walked proudly by my side, pausing ever and anon to look me in the face, meaning to ask:

"How goes it with thee, little master?" Once on ship-board, strengthened by good food and cheered by the comforts of my cabin, I was not long in getting my health back again. After a week's rest, I gave orders to weigh anchor and turn our good ship's head northward, for I was anxious, very anxious to see the elder baron and the gentle baroness, my mother, and tell them all about the wonderful things I had seen.

CHAPTER VI.

How the elder Baron and the Baroness received Bulger and me upon our return from our first voyage. I am decorated by the Emperor with the grand cross of the Crimson Cincture. The elder Baron presents me with a copy of an ancient Roman newspaper. I read of the murder of the beautiful Paula, and the banishment by Cæsar of the Seven Sculptors to a faraway island in the southern seas. I resolved to set out in search of the Island. My departure. Trouble with crew. My sailing-master loses his reason. I hear the cry, Land ho! It is the Sculptors' Island. Description of it. I go ashore. Paula's statue. Adventures on the Island. Bulger makes a wonderful discovery. Something about the strange people who inhabit the Island. Their habits, their pleasures, their characters. I am overtaken by an alarming melancholy. My awful dread at thought of becoming as one of the dwellers on the Sculptors' Isle. I learn of the existence of Antonius. I seek him. Vain endeavor to grasp his hand. Our interview. The strange and moving history of the Seven Sculptors and their descendants. How they were transformed into the Slow Movers. Bulger and I propose to leave the Island. Extraordinary conduct of a bust of the great Cæser. Our farewell to the Slow Movers. Their adieu. Our good ship sails away.

THE BEAUTIFUL PAULA.

Upon my return from my first journey to far away lands, the elder baron and his faithful spouse, my beloved mother, followed by all the retainers of the household, met Bulger and me at the outer gate and welcomed us home with that wild and boisterous joy which only German hearts are capable of.

The elder baron threw his arms around my neck, and, forgetful of the fact that I was only half his size, lifted me completely off the ground in the unreasoning joy of a father's heart, nearly throttling me.

I kicked vigorously, but, the soft felt soles of my oriental shoes prevented me from giving him to understand that he was fast choking me to death.

At last my thoughtful mother noticed that I was growing black in the face, and laying hold of my legs, pulled me downward out of the dangerous embrace in which the elder baron had wrapped me. Not, however, until my father's Nuremberg egg had bored painfully into my protuberant brow, adding another bump to that already bumpy territory. Upon noticing which the elder baron dispatched an attendant to his apartment with orders to search his medicine chest for a bottle of volatile liniment. In his eagerness to undo the harm he had inflicted, he poured a stream of acrid liquid into my eyes, causing me intense suffering. This red and inflamed condition of my eyes, however, the tenants, and retainers attributed to my emotion upon entering the baronial hall once more, after so long an absence.

I didn't regret this little accident at all, for while I am opposed to that ready-made style of emotion which some people always keep on hand, I have no objections to a noble and dignified use of tears.

It is needless to say that every body was delighted to see Bulger. They all found that he had increased in size, beauty and intelligence.

He received all this homage with a dignity that was charming to behold.

To impress the crowd with a due sense of that discipline and self-control which he acquired as the constant companion and confidant of his master, he absolutely refused to touch the many tid-bits and dainty morsels which the retainers offered him, and gazed with the utmost indifference at the other dogs in their mad scramblings for the food which he had declined.

I was very proud of him.

In a few days everything had settled down to its wonted quiet again beneath the baronial roof. Evenings I passed giving accounts of the many wonderful things I had seen while abroad

To these sittings, a few of the older and more confidential household servants were admitted.

My good mother arranged them in a semi-circle behind the chairs of the elder baron and his guests. I, with Bulger by

my side, occupied a dais, either seated by the side of a table holding my curiosities or standing in front of my auditors in an easy position, while I held them spell-bound by my narration.

There was one thing that worried me, and it was this: How will the elder baron receive the announcement of my intention to leave home again, ere many moons?

To my great surprise and delight he didn't even wait for me to make known my intentions.

While seated in my library, one day, poring over a very rare book of travels which I had just purchased, a gentle tap at the door caused Bulger to raise his head and give a low growl.

"Come in!" said I.

It was the elder baron.

"I disturb you!" he began.

"You have that right, baron," I replied, with a gracious smile; "be seated, pray."

And saying this, I arranged the pelt of a very beautiful and rare animal which I had killed while abroad, so as to make a comfortable seat for the elder baron on the canopy.

"My son!" said the baron, "I come to bring thee this little token from our gracious master, the Emperor."

I looked up.

He held in his hand the insignia of the Grand Cross of the Crimson Cincture.

I laid the bauble on the table.

"Little baron," continued my father, "I am well pleased with thee."

I made a low obeisance.

"Thy marvelous adventures fill all mouths. Thou hast set a new lustre on the family name, and I come to rouse thee from thy apparent sloth. Thou must be up and doing. Thou must shake off this indolence which will gain an increased power over thee each passing hour. New triumphs await thee. Go forth once more. Turn aside out of the beaten paths. Seek the wonderful and marvelous. But ere thou settest forth, ponder the contents of this parchment roll. Many years ago, when the down of manhood first came upon my cheek, and

before life's burdens had come to lie heavily on my soul, I found it in the damp and noisome vaults of an ancient Roman Convent, which the pestilential air of an encroaching marsh had emptied of its inmates. It may turn thy footsteps toward something strange and interesting!"

Concealing with difficulty the joy occasioned by my father's words and my earnestness to know the contents of the parchment roll, I returned the elder baron's salutation with marked respect, and he withdrew.

I need not assure the reader of the almost breathless anxiety with which I unroled the volumen.

It was in the Latin tongue, and was the work of a scribe.

The ink had faded somewhat, but, even in places where it had entirely disappeared, I could by the aid of a strong lens readily trace out the words by the lines scratched into the parchment by the point of the reed pen.

It was a copy of an ancient Roman newspaper or Acta Diurna, and bore a date corresponding to our forty-fifth year before the present era.

Caesar was at the height of his power.

Peace reigned, the arts flourished. Rome, the centre of the world, was the home of a glory and magnificence far beyond anything the eyes of man had yet gazed upon.

The contents of this copy of the Acta Diurna were largely made up of detailed accounts of a famous trial just completed at Rome, in which seven noted sculptors had been found guilty of poisoning a beautiful maid named Paula, after they had each completed a statue of her, in order that no other sculptors should ever be able to make use of her for the same purpose.

The judges had pronounced the sentence of death upon them, but in consideration of their splendid services in beautifying the imperial city, Ceasar had changed their punishment from death to lifelong exile.

The seven sculptors had been transported in an imperial galley to a faraway island in the Southern Seas. As stated in this copy of the Acta Diurna it was the most remote piece of land belonging to the Roman Empire lying to the Southward:

"Ad insulam remotissimam imperii romani medianorum."

As an additional act of the imperial clemency the wives and children of the condemned sculptors had been graciously accorded permission to follow their husbands and fathers into their terrible exile.

When I had finished reading all the minute details of this strange crime and its awful results, I found that my blood was coursing through my veins with a mad violence. I paced the floor with such a quick and nervous step and with agitation so plainly visible in my looks, that I was aroused from my reverie by the anxious whining of Bulger, who was following me about the room close upon my heels.

Why not go in quest of this faraway isle to which these seven sculptors and their families were transported by command of great Ceasar?

Perchance in that far-distant isle dwells a race of beings who, forgetting the world, and forgotten by it, will, by their strange habits and peculiar customs so interest me as to repay me for all the dangers I may run in crossing untracked seas and turning aside from ocean paths.

Perchance their descendants may be living yet?

This idea now took possession of my whole being.

Sleep was impossible.

Far into the night I pored over ancient charts.

While deepest silence enwrapped the baronial halls, I worked out in my mind, or, rather, let my mind work out, the course which I should pursue.

For it was always a custom of mine never to attempt to solve the unsolvable. In fact, I early made the discovery that any interference on my part with the mysterious workings of my mind tended rather to impede its action.

So I waited calmly for light.

It came at last.

Closing my eyes, with my inner sight I could see a map of the eastern world traced in glowing, shimmering lines upon an inky background.

And there, too, could I see my course marked out in dotted lines of fire.

With a loud, ringing cry of joy I sprang to my feet and exclaimed: "I shall find this wonderful isle! I shall unlock the portals of the Southern seas! I shall gaze upon the descendants of Paula's murderers!

Come, Bulger! Away! Away!"

Hastily bidding adieu to my parents, I swung myself into the saddle, and, with Bulger securely strapped en croupe, dashed madly away towards the shores of the Mediterranean.

"The baron's mad son is off again!" cried the peasants, as I galloped past their farm houses.

In three days I stood upon the deck of my vessel.

In obedience to my orders, the captain's hand literally rested upon the helm.

All that day he had been standing with his eyes riveted upon the shore, for something told him that I could not be far away.

Everything was in readiness, even to the last biscuit.

As Bulger and I leaped over the rail, my good ship rounded to the wind, and darted away like a thing of life.

The blood tingled in my veins at sight of the blue waves and white bellying sails.

Bulger gave vent to his satisfaction in mad gambols and ear-piercing barks.

It was certainly an auspicious beginning.

Leaving the command of the ship to the mate, the captain joined me in the cabin, where I unfolded to him my project of sailing in the Southern seas in quest of a long-forgotten island.

He made haste to unroll his chart and adjust his spectacles, in order to fix the location of the island when I should give him the latitude and longitude.

Fancy his almost consternation when I told him that the only proof I had of the existence of such an island was the brief mention in the ancient Roman newspaper.

Was I mad?

Did I care no more for life than to throw it away in such a fool-hardy undertaking?

Had I no idea of the rage of the terrible typhoon, the treachery of the hidden reef, the weight of the watery mountains which would topple on our deck?

Could I expect seamen to go where there was no record that the most adventurous sailors of past centuries had ever ploughed the water?

I smiled.

"Master," said I, after a moment's silence, "this ship is mine, and you have sworn to serve me like a true seaman, but if your courage has failed you, you shall be put ashore at the first port we make. Go!"

"Nay, little baron," cried the skipper, "I was only testing your resolution. If you have the courage to sail into unknown seas, I have the courage to follow you, come bright skies and calm waters or come storm clouds and thunderbolt!"

I shook the old man's hand, and bade him go on deck, for at last sleep had come to my wakeful eyes—the first time in three whole weeks—and I wanted to be alone.

In a few days we passed the Straits of Gibraltar and turned southward, keeping the African coat in sight.

I passed my time perfecting myself in the Latin language, and often called forth very vigorous protestations from Bulger by addressing him in that tongue, and making use of him as a sort of audience before which I delivered my speeches after I had rounded them and polished them.

The only stops we made now were for water or provisions.

By daylight and starlight my staunch ship bounded along on her course as if some friendly nereids were pushing at her stern. In the long watches of the night I lay in my hammock and pictured to myself that Roman galley as it bore those seven exiles with kith and kin away from their beloved land forever.

Ere another moon had bent her crescent in the evening sky we had reached the Cape, and came to anchor with intent to overhaul our ship most thoroughly before going farther southward

This occupied several days.

I chafed under the delay.

Ten times a day I summoned the ship's master to my cabin and urged him to make greater haste. He bore with me most patiently. My heart gave a leap, when, at last, I heard the master order the crew to set the sails.

The seamen were singing and tugging away at the main-sheets as I stepped upon the deck.

"How shall I head her, little Baron?" asked the master, raising his hand to his cap.

"Dead to the southard!" I replied.

He stood transfixed.

He had thought that we would round the Cape and follow the usual course to the Indies.

His lips move as if to protest.

I cut him short, however, with an imperious wave of the hand.

Several of the sailors, noticing the pallor which had overspread the captain's face, drew near and stood gazing upon us, half wonderingly, half inquiringly.

"Captain!" said I calmly, but quite loud enough to be overheard by the men standing in a group near by, "my pistols were made by the Emperor's armorer. They never miss fire. Let me find you changing this vessel's course a single point east or west of south and I'll kill you in your tracks!"

Saying this I walked away.

From that moment all went well.

The ship's master saw that I was determined to have my way, even if I lost my life in consequence, and he yielded.

Turning around to the group of sailors, I called out:

"A thousand ducats to the man who first sights land!"

A hearty cheer rent the air, and calling to Bulger to follow me, I went below to think.

That night I not only took the precaution to hang a lanthorn so that I could lie in my hammock and see a ship's compass at any time I might awake, but, fearful lest some treachery might be attempted, I ordered my faithful Bulger to sleep with his back against the door so that the least vibration would arouse him.

Night after night these precautions were followed out most strictly. During the day, too, my pistols were always in my belt.

Bulger felt the danger I was in, and he, by his vigilance gave me the advantage of eyes in the back of my head.

A low growl warned me of the approach of the master or one of the crew.

Thus protected and guarded, I felt that nothing save a general mutiny need be feared. And this I knew to be almost impossible, for a number of the crew were too devoted to me to listen to any traitorous proposals. They would have slain the master in cold blood had he dared to breathe the word mutiny!

Things went very well for about ten days when I saw that a terrible struggle was going on in the captain's mind.

I began to fear that he might lose his reason and throw himself into the sea.

His face took on a yellow-greenish hue.

He was literally dying of fright.

One morning he threw himself upon his knees in front of me, and with tear-stained cheeks implored me to put back to the African coast again.

I did all I could to quiet him, but in vain.

His reason was slowly but surely giving way.

Calling the mate to me, I put him in comamnd of the vessel, and directed him to confine the captain in his cabin and place a guard over him.

It cut me to the heart to be obliged to do this, for the poor fellow begged like a dog to be left in command of his ship.

But I was deaf to his entreaties.

I felt that now all trouble was at an end.

The wind was blowing fifteen knots an hour.

Every stitch of sail had been crowded on.

We fairly leapt out of the water like a thing of life, half flying half swimming.

Ever and anon I glanced at the compass.

She was headed dead south.

My cheeks tingled and I could feel the flow of warm blood through every vein in my body.

The moon went up like a shield of burnished gold. The sea glittered like liquid fire. Anon, a porpose leaped into the air and sent a thousand ripples circling away as he plunged into the water again

Our good ship cleft the glassy bosom of the sea like some huge black monster of the deep, and left a trail of fire in her wake as far as the eye could reach.

Towards midnight I went to rest.

But neither rest nor sleep was possible.

Half undressing, I threw myself into my hammock, and Bulger took his accustomed place at the door.

The lanthorn was not strong enough to overcome the light of the full moon. It streamed through the bull's eyes in weird, fantastic rays, and crowded my cabin with strange and mysterious forms.

They were seven!

Their faces and figures were godlike, so white, so beautiful were they.

There was an indescribable sadness in their full dark eyes.

They spake not a word.

Suddenly the paneling of the cabin ceiling parted, and disclosed a staircase wrapped in dim, uncertain light.

Adown these steps came a most gracious being, so white and fair and lovely that I gazed with bated breath.

Down, down it came, nearer and nearer.

She needed but wings to be an angel!

But, oh! her fair face was so filled with sorrow!

Her lips were parted, her long black hair fell in confused tresses on her shoulders.

She stepped into the cabin. And then, with a quick, dread look, her gaze fell upon the seven bowed figures.

"Paula!" they cried, and drew their white robes over their heads.

* * * * * *

"Land ho! Land ho!"

What! Could I believe my ears?

"Land ho! Land ho!"

With a bound I sprang from my hammock and rushed upon deck.

Ay, it was true! There, half a mile ahead of us, was a sight that stunned me like the blow of a bludgeon.

Land it was, but not such a land as in my wildest dreams I had hoped to find.

Ten thousand lights glimmered on that mysterious shore, and illumined the front of a Roman temple whiter than milk. A marble staircase of the same hue led down to the very water's edge.

A sacrifice was in progress.

From the highest terrace a column of black smoke curled slowly upward.

No sound reached my ear.

I stood almost bereft of my senses.

At last, my power of speech returned. I ordered anchor to be cast, and clinging to the shrouds of my good ship, gazed long and joyfully upon the entrancing scene.

The land rose in natural terraces from the seashore, and no matter in what direction you looked, your eye caught glimpses of a graceful statue or group of statuary gleaming in the white moonlight, amid the dark foliage, like white-robed figures astray in a wood.

"It must be!" I murmured to myself.

"I have found it! This Roman temple, this marble stairway, these groups of statuary, all point to the glorious success of my voyage of discovery. This is the Sculptors' Isle!"

How long I stood there gazing upon this beautiful shore I know not. Some one pulling gently at my sleeve roused me from my reverie.

It was Bulger.

I stooped and stroked his head for a few moments.

Suddenly I awoke to a sense of great weariness, and casting another glance toward that mysterious shore, I turned and descended to the cabin.

I soon fell into a deep sleep.

The terrible strain upon my nerves since leaving the Cape, caused by the half mutiny of the crew, the insanity of the ship's master, and the long watches through which I had lain and listened for the cry of land, had at last told upon me.

The sun was several hours high when I sprang out of my hammock and rushed upon deck.

Could it all have been a dream? Should I find the noble temple, staircase of marble, and all the towering statues melted away into thin air?

Ah no!

That beautiful shore was still there, unrolled before my wondering eyes like some fair picture full of light and grace and delicious coloring.

"Man the launch! I called out and in quicker time than it takes to tell it, I was on my way to the shore of the Sculptors' Isle.

Faithful Bulger sat beside me, his eyes bright and expressive as he gazed into my face.

Landing at the foot of the marble stairway, I sprang lightly out of the launch, followed by Bulger, and bounded up the marble steps.

There were three landings before I reached the level of the temple, from each of which the outlook grew more and more delightful. In truth, it was a glorious approach to produce which art and nature had fairly outdone themselves. At length I cleared the last flight of steps, and with a throbbing heart crossed the tessellated court and paused in front of the entrance to the temple.

The embers were still smouldering on the altar, around which stood several white-robed priests with low-bowed heads and averted faces. Unwilling to break in upon their solemn office, I turned and followed a broad way, paved with marble and shaded by most graceful trees and trailing vines.

At every step my eyes fell upon some statue of ravishing beauty—now nymphs; now goddess; now Jove himself; now the great Caesar; now the fair Graces; now terrible Pluto; now smiling Ceres; now the crescent-crowned Diana, accoutered

for the chase; now dancing satyrs; now goat-footed Pan; now some Roman hero or statesman; and ever and anon, came the figure of a maiden, wondrously fair, but with an unutterable look of sadness upon her beautiful face. So often did the same figure meet my gaze that I was led at last to approach its pedestal in hopes of finding some explanation. I gave a cry of pleasure as my eyes fell upon the name sculptured there.

It was Paula.

Now every doubt was dissipated.

I had indeed found the Sculptors' Isle

Broad winding paths, leading right and left, now lured my footsteps. No fairy land could be more beautiful.

Golden fruit glistened 'mid the dark green leaves.

Flowers of countless hues bloomed on every side, sending forth the most delicate perfumes. Trailing vines hung in graceful festoons or twined around the pedestals of the statues, carrying their white blossoms to the whiter hands of these silent and motionless inhabitants of this region of loneliness. I say inhabitants, for as yet my eye had seen no living creature, save the priests grouped about the altar.

Have I landed upon the shores of an island, upon which nature, with a lavish hand, has bestowed stately forests, placid lakes, purling brooks, trees laden with delicious fruits, plants waving their flowery tassels and plumes in the perfumed air, vines trailing their richly variegated foliage from tree to tree, a radiant sky above, a soil clad with velvety verdure beneath, only to find it abandoned, deserted of man; a thing of beauty and yet loneliness, a mere polished and painted shell, out of which all life has gone forever?"

Such was the train of thought which busied my mind as I strolled along through these winding paths paved with marble shut in by a leafy roof, through which ever and anon the sunlight burst to light up the masterpieces of the sculptor's art, around whose pedestals climbed and clambered scores of flowering vines, some carrying in their curved laps clusters of berries, brighter in hue than burnished gold, others holding out to the passer-by bunches of grapes deeper in purple than the Lydian dye.

As I pursued my way through this enchanted garden, in which the swaying lily stalks bent their perfumed-filled cups down to my cheeks and the trees dropped their gold and purple fruit at my feet, while deep in the bosky thicket of red-leaved shrubs and silken-tufted pine, the melancholy nightingale warbled his liquid melody in slow and plaintive measure, my heart yearned for the sound of a human voice.

"Would that some living being," I cried, "no matter how bent and twisted in figure, or how discordant in voice, might come forth to meet me in this beautiful solitude."

I noticed now that my path was ascending a gently sloping hillock. I quickened my pace, for I was anxious to stand upon some elevation, so that I could command a more extensive view of the outlying country.

As I gained the summit of the hillock, a scene of indescribable beauty met my gaze.

As far as the eye could reach I saw unrolled beneath me a landscape of such surpassing loveliness that I paused spell-bound. Imagine a valley shut in by wooded heights, through which a silvery stream courses tranquilly; here a forest giant spreads its far-reaching limbs, and there a clump of fruit trees display their load of golden treasures in the sunlight; on this side flowering shrubs shine white as ivory against the dark greensward, on that with trailing vines and trimmed copses, man's hand has built many a shady bower of fantastic outline; to this add scores of statues posed in every conceivable attitude of grace and beauty—here a group, there a single figure, and farther on by twos and threes, standing, reclining, sitting, at play, in meditation, listening, reading, thrumming stringed instruments, in attitudes of the chase, casting the quoit, or reaching up to pluck fruit or flowers.

"Is this a dream?" I murmured. "Am I not the sport of some mischievous spirit of the place?"

From this deep reverie the loud barking of Bulger aroused me with shock-like violence.

I looked in the direction of the sound.

Poor, foolish dog, he was gamboling about one of the statues and amusing himself in waking the echoes with his voice.

I was a little nettled by the interruption, and called to him to cease his barking.

It seemed to me almost a sacrilege to disturb the deep repose of this fair valley.

Again the barking broke forth. This time Bulger's strange antics were wilder than before.

He seemed fairly beside himself bounding around and around the statue which was that of a young man in the act of reaching aloft for fruit or flowers—and giving vent to a sort of half anger, half mischief, in a series of barks, growls and whinings. Rare indeed was it that Bulger did not give heed to my wishes, no matter how faintly expressed, but now, not even a threatening tone of voice seemed to have the slightest effect upon him.

He continued his mad gamboling and sharp, angry barking. Determined to reproach him most severely for his disobedience, I strode angrily toward him.

I drew near.

I looked! I saw!

Ashes of my forefathers, what? The statue had wide-opened eyes. The statue had the blush of life on its cheeks.

Motion, movement, even to a hair's breadth, there was none! And yet these fair blue eyes were bent upon Bulger in half-inquisitive, half-wondering gaze.

I rubbed my eyes and looked again.

I took a step forward.

Suddenly a wave of fear crept over me like the flow of icy water. Would the living marble, as it warmed to life, moved by some long pent-up passions, raise its hand and strike me dead?

Gathering myself together, I glanced toward a group of maidens at play beneath the shade of a leafy roof of arched branches and interlacing vines.

Quicker than it takes to tell it, I sprang forward and fixed my gaze upon their faces.

Death could not hold the human form in attitude more motionless than theirs.

And yet their eyes were filled with strange light.

Upon their fair faces the red tint of life glowed, bright and warm!

Where was I?

A strange feeling of half dread, half delight, now swept over me.

And still I dared not speak. My voice will break the spell by which all these breathing children of earth's flinty breast keep their hold on life, and they will fade away to nothingness.

And now the eyes of her nearest me—of deeper black than polished coal, appeared bent full upon me. I could see, I thought, the glisten of those ebon orbs, as if a tear had broken over them.

Her hand was outstretched.

What if I touch it, thought I, to see if it have the warmth of life within it, or whether it be not in truth a thing of stone, and I the sport of some mischievous spirit of the island?

I'll do it, if I'm slain like a poor worm, which, warmed by an approaching flame crawls to meet it.

I touched its finger-tips!

O, wondrous thing!

They were not of stone, but of softest, warmest flesh!

I staggered back, expecting to see the group vanish in thin air.

But no; it moved not.

It stood as motionless as before!

And now I felt my limbs grow strong beneath me.

I determined to speak, come evil or come good!

Fixing my gaze upon their fair young faces, I uncovered and addressed them thus:

"O, strange and mysterious beings, resent not this bold intrusion of a puny mortal upon your sacred repose! Speak to me! If ye so will, let me take my feet off the soil of your fair island. But ere I go, speak to me, let me know whether ye be not the creations of some spirit of this isle, or whether ye are really living, breathing beings!"

No sound issued from those rosy lips, parted as if in the very act of speaking.

No movement, no tremor, came to break the marble-like pose of these fair figures.

A whole minute elapsed.

To me it seemed an eternity.

I stood riveted to the ground in most anxious suspense.

The minutes dragged their heavy bodies along one after another.

But joy unutterable!

Their lips begin to move.

A smile, almost imperceptible at first, spreads slowly, slowly, over their faces.

The crimson of their cheeks takes on a deeper hue.

Their eyes bend a most sweet and friendly look upon me.

The word "we" falls gently on my ear.

Another pause!

I lean forward, in most painful suspense, to catch the next faint syllable.

It came at last.

"Live!"

"They live!" I cried in a loud and joyous voice, "they live! I am not the sport of any strange divinity. These figures are not cold and senseless marble, but warm-blooded, breathing, thinking, living beings!"

I cannot tell you the depth of my satisfaction that this discovery was made by my loved Bulger. He saw the terrible perplexity which had come upon his master, and hastened to his rescue; not frowning face, not threatening voice was sufficient to turn him from his purpose of letting light in upon my darkened mind. In my deep contrition, I could scarcely bring myself to speak his name.

I felt how unworthy of his love I was.

But he pardoned me with a nobility of character more than human and spake his forgiveness by covering my hands with caresses and uttering a series of soft low barks.

With Bulger by my side, I now mingled with these flesh and blood companions of the island's marble dwellers, passing from one group to another in speechless wonderment. Ay, in good

faith they were alive, but not more so than the flowers, the shrubs, the trees, the vines which helped to make up the lovely scene of which they were the brightest and fairest ornaments.

The vines moved from place to place more rapidly than they, the flowers oped their buds more quickly than the maidens did their lips. Like beautiful figures of wax, moved by the slow uncoiling of some hidden spring, these living statues passed hours, nay days, in rising to their feet or sinking down upon the velvety greensward.

For several hours I stood watching the white hand of a maiden as it reached forward, with imperceptible motion to pluck a red-cheeked peach which hung beside her. A full hour went by ere those delicate fingers were clasped around the peach, another ere it had been carried to her lips. There, all day long, she held it pressed, but as the sun went down behind the wooded hills, it fell from her loosened grasp and rolled towards my feet. I slowly stooped, for I was not long in discovering that my quick movements pained these animated statues, and picked it up. I could feel that some of the pulp had been drawn from the luscious fruit, but the skin was hardly broken, so gently had she fed upon it.

At this moment, seeing a smile upon the face of one of the maiden's I turned to find upon whom she bent her gaze.

It was a handsome youth, who stood, perhaps fifty feet distant, with his eyes fixed beamingly upon the maiden's.

"Surely" thought I, "affection will, as in other lands, quicken their movements; they will advance toward each other somewhat rapidly now.

But no, the long twilight yielded little by little to the deeper shadows; night came; the moon set her glowing disc in the heavens, and yet that youth was not near enough to clasp the hand of the maiden he loved.

From the first coming of the twilight, smiles had been slowly gathering upon the faces of the other youths and maidens, whose eyes were turned upon the lovers.

At this moment a gentle "ha!" fell upon my ear, and, after the lapse of half an hour, another and louder "ha!" followed

it, to be, after a still longer pause, followed by still another "ha!" This last "ha!" was lengthened out into a clear and ringing note which lasted several seconds. Then it grew fainter and fainter, and died away like a spent echo. Their mirth was over.

As I was threading my way among these living statues, one morning, I came upon a group of children at play.

At first I could not see that they had noticed my coming at all, but after the lapse of a quarter of an hour I discovered that their large beautifully clear eyes were slowly turning toward me, so I determined to sit down near by and observe them. Fancy my delight upon finding that a delicate thread-like flowering vine had twined around and around the body of a little golden-haired maid of about seven, encircled her neck with its many colored leaves and coral berries, and coiled itself like a crown of gold and crimson upon her soft ringlets, dropping its blossoms and tendrils gently down around her head and shoulders.

Seeing my astonishment, and hearing my words of delight, a mild-faced woman seated near me slowly, slowly raised her hands and extended her fingers to make me understand that these little cherubs had been ten days at play there upon the ground.

"This beautiful vine," thought I, "has joined in their sport. As much alive as they, it is in truth one of their playmates, and has wound itself lovingly around the child seated nearest to it."

I looked again. Lo! a tree loaded with delicious nuts was swinging in the breeze and shaking them into the laps of these children at play, while on the other side, a tall, graceful plant bearing cup-shaped flowers of sunny whiteness, each of which I noticed was filled with limpid water, drops of which sparkled in the sunlight like polished gems, gently brushed against the cheek of a smiling boy, as if to say:

"Drink, dear little brother!"

"Wonderful!" cried I, "these happy creatures, these trees and flowers, these fruits and vines are all children of the same family. No storms ever come to darken these fair skies. Eter-

nal spring reigns here. By daylight, starlight and moonlight their lives flow gently along like some broad, silvery stream, whose motion is too slow for human eye to note it. Mysterious people! How shall I fathom the wonderful secret of your existence? How shall I read the history of a people whose only books are speechless brooks and silent groves, whose tongues have so lost their power to interpret thought that months might go by and yet the mystery remain unsolved!"

After a sojourn of a few days among the "Slow Movers," as I shall call them, I made a discovery which alarmed me greatly.

I found that this mysterious silence, this strange fate which cast me among living creatures with whom converse was next to impossible, this utter inability to distinguish the living statues from the marble ones, was beginning to prey upon my mind.

Bulger noticed my ever-increasing melancholy, and exerted himself to amuse and comfort me.

I responded but poorly to his thousand and one cunning tricks and laughable antics.

In fact, I felt that my mind was gradually yielding to some dread influence which pervaded the very air, and which, even hour by hour, so gained in strength that I realized the necessity of making a superhuman effort to break away from the power it had already acquired over me, or else become myself a living statue and brother to the forms of flesh and marble which inhabited this wonderland.

I will not weary my readers with minute details of the plan which I had conceived to end the danger which threatened me, to snatch myself from the living death which I could already feel creeping over me.

In my despair I determined to apply to the oldest of the Slow Movers, and throw myself upon his mercy, so to speak, to tell him of my longing to escape from the terrible fate threatening me, to return home to my beloved parents, who would go down in sorrow to their graves if I, their sole child, their pride and their hope, should never come again to gladden their old age.

But more than this, I determined if possible, to learn the his-

tory of the island and its mysterious folk, and to that end I resolved to beseech him to indicate to me where I might find some record of their past, some book or parchment, so that I might not go through life burdened with the brain-racking thought that I had been powerless to solve this mystery—a thought, which, if it did not shorten my days, would most surely embitter them.

As I have already explained, in attempting to converse with the Slow Movers I was confronted with a two-fold difficulty. In the first place, though I might burst with impatience, yet must I preserve a perfectly calm and placid exterior, and, in the second place, when, after the long and wearying delay, it came my turn to make reply, that reply must not exceed the snail's pace of the Slow Movers' speech, else their bright eyes clouded up and they seemed absolutely paralyzed by the rapidity of my utterance. Their eye-lids sank slowly down and they seemed to fall into a deep slumber, out of which it took hours to arouse them.

At the first streak of dawn I sought out the aged Slow Mover, whom I had often noted in his leafy temple, seated on a marble pediment his eyes fixed on the silent stream which bathed the very roots of the trees, whose wide-spreading branches helped to roof over his habitation.

All that day and the starry night which followed it, I sat at his feet.

Picture to yourself my utter despair at learning that not a word or a line, not a leaf or a parchment, was in existence, which, might end my fearful anxiety. I say fearful, for stronger and stronger, hour by hour, grew the impulse to put an end to this life of useless, senseless activity and join the throng of living statues into whose heart no vain regrets came to darken their placid dream-life.

On the morning of the second day a thought burst upon my mind. It was this:

Perchance there may dwell, somewhere on this isle, some one living creature, who, unlike his brothers, may possess the power of rapid speech, whose tongue, for some reason or other, may have stayed loosened.

I reasoned thus: In every land there were opposites, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, graceful and awkward, swift and slow. Surely on this isle must live such contrasts as these. True, it may be an exception; but it would be most wonderful if it did not exist.

All that day I spent in imparting unto the aged Slow Mover my train of thought.

It was deep in the twilight ere I had succeeded in putting the question to him: Whether there was not some living creature dwelling on this island whose powers of speech were more like mine, and to whom I might, in my ever-increasing dread of transformation into a Slow Mover, flee for refuge from myself, for satisfaction of the irresistible longing pressing on my very soul.

But the shades of evening were not so deep that I could not note the darker shadow which began to gather on the face of the aged Slow Mover when I had completed my question.

I was startled

So violent were the beatings of my heart that they sounded loud, though muffled, above the sighing of the zephyr, the rustle of the leaves, the plaintive warbling of the nightingale.

As this shadow went on growing, ever deeper and deeper, on the old man's visage, I felt that I had touched some ancient wound, which, though long-forgotten, now bled afresh.

His lips parted, his head sank slowly, slowly, a sigh came forth, so full of meaning, so like a tale-bearer of some long hidden sorrow, that I feared for the worst.

My limbs stiffened.

I could feel the blood lessen its pace in my veins and go groping along as if uncertain of its way.

I pressed the tips of my fingers to my cheeks. They were cold as polished marble.

I essayed to speak. The words would not come.

At last I made a violent effort—

"Bulger!" I whispered.

Poor dog, he slept at my feet.

I struggled to escape the spell for one brief moment, that I might stoop to give my faithful friend a farewell caress.

Hist!

The Slow Mover spoke.

"Son!"

I was saved!

He had aught to say to me.

The spell was broken.

My heart began to beat again; the warm blood ran tingling through my veins.

It was a narrow escape.

Already my finger tips had cooled.

Another moment and I would have joined the throng of Slow Movers, and become a brother to the marble dwellers on the Sculptors' Isle.

All that night the aged Slow Mover talked to me. And when the sun went up I knew all. I knew the secret which had so darkened his placid countenance. I knew the cave in which dwelt the hermit of the Sculptors' Isle—an outcast, a prisoner, shut in between the narrow walls of a cavern by the sea, for no fault of his, for no sin, for no wrong.

Nature had so willed it.

Why, the aged Slow Mover knew not.

Antonius was the name which the hermit bore.

When morning came I sought him out.

I found him seated by his cavern's portal, looking out upon the glory of the eastern sky.

This was the secret of his exile:

Some cruel fate had, in his youth, visited him with a dread disease, not unlike that which is known as St. Vitus' dance. When the fit was upon him, not only did he lose all control over his limbs, so that his feet bore him whither he willed not to go, and that, too, with extreme rapidity, but his arms likewise executed the most rapid and vigorous gestures, now in apparent anger, now entreaty, now wonder. You will readily understand why ill-fated Antonius came to be banished from the midst of the Slow Movers.

Although their brother, and deeply beloved of them, his lightning-like rapidity of motion, his violent gestures, his almost

ceaseless change of attitude, not only offended the Slow Movers, it dazed them; it shocked them; it checked the sluggish flow of life blood within their veins, and threatened them all with slow but certain death.

He must go!

He did!

Antonius was banished to the cavern by the sea, where never came sound, save the ocean's roar when lashed by the demons of the gale, or its sad murmur and ceaseless break and splash in its moments of slumber and rest.

But, most terrible of all the manifestations of the unfortunate Antonius' fearful ailment was the utterly wild and ungovernable rapidity of his speech.

Like maddened steeds, tongue and lips rushed along!

To the eyes and ears of the Slow Movers, such a violently expressive face, such mad rapidity of utterance, were death itself!

Not one brief month would have found a living statue in that home of flinty hearts, had Antonius not gone!

Antonius was thankful for that dread decree, which housed him forever in the cavern by the sea!

He saw the sufferings of his people, and though his eyes in that brief time wept more tears than all his brethren ever had shed in their sluggish lives, yet were they but a poor proof of the awful grief he felt.

Antonius turned towards me as I approached the spot where he sat wrapped in deep meditation. A sad, but withal kindly smile flitted about his lips, like the quick but faint glimmer of the lightning in the distant sky.

He rose.

I paused to await his bidding to approach him.

He spake not a word, but stretched out his hand.

I bounded forward to clasp it and press it to my lips.

At that instant the fit fell on him.

I could see the look of pain which flashed across his face.

Away he glided, now backward, now forward, now sidewise, now obliquely, his hand outstretched in a desperate effort to

reach me, who, with equal desperation, advanced and retreated in a mad endeavor to grasp what constantly eluded me.

Bulger utterly unable to comprehend this wild dance among the rocks of that cavernous shore, followed my heels barking furiously.

I could take no time to quiet him.

Away, away, sped Antonius with redoubled speed, his right hand extended toward me as if with a pitiful prayer to grasp it and thus end the fit which was shaking his limbs so furiously.

Pausing to catch my breath, I again pursued the flitting figure with a determination to overtake it or perish in the attempt.

At last it seemed to circle in smaller and ever smaller rings.

Now was my time!

I sprang upon that whirling form, with a sort of mad desperation, to seize and hold its outstretched hand.

At length I held it.

But no!

His body had come to a rest, but now high over my head, now at my feet, now flashing up one side, now down the other, now whizzing in front of my eyes, now encircling my head like a bird in swift flight that hand went on, ever on, in its wild and mysterious course!

My strength was failing me!

Shall I ever be able to grasp it!

Antonius, too, showed signs of yielding to the awful power of the dread disease which tormented him!

His face took on a strange pallor! His breast heaved convulsively. With one last despairing effort I succeeded in catching his hand in its flight around my head!

I clung to it with desperate vigor!

My touch dispelled the venom from his veins.

He seemed to awake as from some awful dream. He passed his hand across his eyes.

He smiled.

Still clinging to his hand, I gently forced him to be seated upon a rocky bench, over which the ocean had woven a velvety covering of sea-grass and weeds.

"Antonius!" I cried, "peace come upon thee! Forget thy suffering. Be as thou once wert! My touch can give thee rest at least for a brief respite!"

He pressed my hand. A deep sigh lifted his breast. It was the last gasp of the demon which oppressed him.

He was now at rest.

To me his utterance was rapid but not more so than that of many quick thinkers with whom I had conversed.

"What wouldst thou?" said he, in a low but strangely sweet, mild voice.

I unfolded to him the object of my coming.

I went back to the finding of the Roman newspaper and my departure from home.

All, all; I told him all; how I had come into the home of the Slow Movers, how I had mistaken them for marble like the rest of the figures about the island, how I longed to have the mystery cleared up.

All that day Antonius and I sat by the sea in most delightful converse.

Only once, at high noon, did he set a brief limit to his tale while we passed into his cavern to partake of food and drink.

With a high-bounding heart, I listened to his story of the landing of the Seven Sculptors upon the isle. Their first task had been to rear the glorious temple with its long flight of marble steps leading down to the sea. Then they, and, later, their sons, and their sons' sons, had set to work to people this beautiful island with almost countless figures of the rarest grace and finish.

In the forests, by the river's banks, through the valley, on the hillside, adown the terraces, to the very water's edge, rose the faultless statues in wondrous beauty and profusion.

Here, there and everywhere, forms of matchless grace gleamed, snowwhite amid the leafy bowers or tangled underwood.

A mysterious ardor burned within the hearts of these exiled artists. It would seem that theirs was a wild sort of hope to rear on that far-distant isle another Rome—an infant

daughter, but fairer and whiter in her marble magnificence than the glorious mother who sate upon her seven hills!

Times and times again, aye, thrice three score and ten, the wretched Paula arose out of the quarried blocks, ever fair and ever fairer, now bent in awful grief, now putting the very skies to shame with the entrancing beauty of her upturned, pleading, sweet and pitiful face.

Here and there, too, stood great Caesar, never to be forgotten for his godlike clemency in snatching the sculptors from terrible death.

As the second century of the exile dawned upon the little Roman Kingdom, far away beneath the Southern skies, at the very moment when the colony was waxing strong and vigorous a strange and mysterious thing happened to the dwellers in this island home of sweet content.

No more male children were born!

The seven sculptors, now bent with age, and their faces hollowed by the sharp chisels of remorse, went, one after the other to the dark realm of Death.

Their sons, too, came into ripe manhood. And their sons grew up, happy in the possession of that glorious talent which had peopled the isle with such matchless forms of beauty.

But now the race had reached the end of its long reign in the world of art.

Decade after decade slipped away, and still there came not one male child to gladden a sculptor's home.

A sort of blank despair sank upon the colony.

The elder sculptors laid their chisels down in utter hopelessness.

Even the younger wrought less and less.

Still there came no boy to wake the old-time song and laughter of that once joyous island home.

Fingers cunning in art grew stiff with age.

Hearts full of glorious inspiration waxed dull and spiritless! One by one they all went the way which mortal feet must tread.

A terrible, a wonderful change came over the people.

Weighed down by this leaden grief, surrounded day and night by these speechless, motionless marble forms, which, although silent as the very clod itself, yet cried out unceasingly: "Give us more companions in these solitudes!" these unfortunate people almost turned to marble itself.

They became, in good sooth, brothers and sisters to the marble dwellers on this island.

At length the end came!

The last sculptor was laid upon the carved bier of the great white temple by the sea!

A silence so long, so deep, so dreadful, fell upon the people that it almost seemed their speech was lost forever.

Within the dark grottoes and bosky underwood, they crawled to hide away from the very light of day.

Their limbs, once so supple and elastic, ever ready to bear their owners over hill and across plain, delighting in the dance, inured to the race, now became heavy and slow.

They seemed almost about to turn to stone, and join the silent company around them.

In good sooth, such a fate was imminent, when the happening of a joyful event averted it.

A year had passed since the last sculptor had gone to join the shadowy caravan which moves forever across the desert of Eternal Silence, when his seven sad-faced daughters were fairly startled by an infant's cry.

But look!

Their widowed mother stands before them with a babe nestled in her arms.

It is a son!

The joyful tidings can only creep from family to family.

Alas! it was too late to call them back to old-time customs and habits, too late to start their blood again in old-time bounding, leaping course through their veins.

They were a changed people!

True, their happiness came again, but it was not the same. They could smile and laugh, but it was scarcely more than faces of marble moved by some mysterious power. They could

REMARKABLE BEHAVIOR OF A BUST OF CÆSAR IN THE LAND OF THE SLOW MOVERS.

talk, but so slowly fell the words that it almost seemed some statue spoke amid the leafy coverts of the island. They could move, but snail or tortoise outstripped them with ease.

Ay, they were changed indeed; fated henceforth to people their beautiful island home with living statues.

For years in long flight sped away, till one century followed another, and yet the wondrous talent came back no more.

It was lost forever!

Long, long ago, too, the people forgot the story of their fathers.

It is kept alive in the hearts of a few chosen ones, and they hand it down, each quarter century, to younger keepers selected for the purpose.

To Antonius the secret had been thus confided.

And such was the tale he told to me!

With a light heart, now that its weight of doubt and uncertainty had been lifted from it, I bade Antonius farewell, and, followed by Bulger wended my way back to the abodes of the Slow Movers.

As I passed through one of the groves peopled with marble forms, I paused, I hardly knew why, in front of an admirable bust of the great Caesar.

Bulger joined me, and there we stood, children of this late day, with our eyes uplifted to the face of him whose smallest word was once copied down on waxen tablet as if it were the utterance of a god.

I had always liked Caesar.

We resembled each other in many ways.

We were both men of action.

I felt sorry for him now, that he should be forced to live, even in the shape of marble, among such dull and inactive people as the Slow Movers.

I told him so.

"And yet, Julius," said I, "called of men the Great Caesar, what a fortunate thing it is that thou art not living now, for thou wouldst be overcome with shame at finding everybody reading my adventures while the book which thou wrotest

concerning Gaul lies mouldy and dust-covered on the shelves of the libraries!"

The following day, in passing that way again, and glancing up at great Caesar's face, I noticed that a smile had just started in the right corner of his mouth. So stolid had he become through his long residence among the Slow Movers that he had just begun to be amused by the remark I had made on the previous day.

Thoughts of home now arose in my mind.

The fact is that shortly after my interview with Antonius in his cavern by the sea, Bulger had commenced to show unmistakable signs of home-sickness. So I dispatched him with a note to the officer of my vessel to begin preparations at once for the return voyage.

Bulger made haste to execute the commission.

He proceeded to the foot of the marble staircase, and then by loud barking attracted the attention of the officer whom I had left in command.

He sent a boat ashore and Bulger met it with my letter in his mouth.

To tell the truth, I would have fain lingered for a week or so longer among the Slow Movers, but it was plain to be seen that they were growing restive at my presence.

On the cheeks of many of them all signs of ruddy peach-bloom had disappeared.

Day by day they grew more and more like their marble brethren.

My quick movements so wearied their eyes that after a few hours' stay in their midst I found myself surrounded by a company of deep sleepers

Nor dared I speak.

For no matter how I softened my voice, or how slowly I uttered my words, they jarred upon the delicate ears of the Slow Movers, and signs of suffering gradually passed over their faces.

My resolution was therefore quickly formed.

With a snail's pace I passed from group to group, from bower

to bower, from grove to grove, saying in a soft and measured tone: "Fare————well! Fare————well!"

Then I directed my steps toward the white temple by the sea, for I knew my boat's crew were waiting for me at the foot of the marble staircase.

As I passed in front of Great Caesar's statue I turned to wave a last adieu.

What saw I, think you?

Why, that same smile which had begun in the right corner of his mouth several days ago, had crossed over to the other side of his face and was just at the left corner of his mouth.

On the right side, whence it had come, all was as stern and calm as when he sat enthroned at Rome, and ruled the world.

Several hours later, as we were busy setting the sails of my good ship there fell upon my ear in a soft, echo-like tone, the word.

"Fare!"

The Slow Movers had begun to speak their adieu. The winds were favorable.

The sails filled.

As the sun went down, pouring a flood of golden light upon the beautiful marble staircase, the great white temple and the many snowy statues which gleamed so bright and fair amid the dark foliage of the trees and vines upon the terraces of that mysterious island I threw myself upon the deck with intent to keep my eyes fixed upon the lovely scene as long as possible.

My good ship sailed away in deepest silence. For I had given orders that no one should speak above a whisper.

Now the Sculptors' Isle had faded to a mere speck in the horizon, and now, in the gathering shades of night, it was swallowed up, and lost forever!

My heart grew heavy.

Bulger nestled his head in my lap, with his loving eyes fixed full upon me.

Sleep overcame us both.

The sky was star-studded when we awoke.

The cool night wind had refreshed me.

I sprang up with the intention of going below. At that instant there came floating along on the evening breeze, like a mountain echo nearly spent, a soft mysterious sound.

My ear caught it! It was:

"W—e l—l!"

The Slow Movers had finished speaking their adieu.

CHAPTER VII.

Once more I grow tired of the quiet pleasures of home. The elder Baron opposes my leaving the land. His reasons. How I freed the ancestral estates from the pests of moles, meadow-mice and ground-squirrels; and how I set out for the Indies with my faithful Bulger. I enter a wild and untrodden territory. Wonderful transformation of day into night, and night into day. The huge fire-flies. My capture of one and what it brought forth. How I reached the borders of Palin-mâ-Talin, the Great Gloomy Forest. Benè-agâ the blind guide. My sojourn in his cave. I enter Palin-mâ-Talin under his guidance. Strange adventures in the Great Gloomy Forest. Benè-agâ takes leave of me. My advance is blocked by Bōga-Drappa, the Dread Staircase. My flight down its treacherous steps. I enter the land of the Umi-Lobas. or Man-Hoppers. Am carried a prisoner to their king. Something about him and his people. King Gâroo's affection for me. His gift to me of copies of all the books in the royal library—All about the princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ. I am condemned to a life-long imprisonment among the Umi-Lobas. I plan an escape. How it was done. Efforts of King Gâ-roo to capture me. Farewell of little princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ. How I sailed away from the land of the Umi-Lobas, and made my way back across India. My return home.

PORTRAIT OF ONE OF MY MOUSERS IN RUBBER BOOTS.

Like all lovers of a roving life, I was not long in growing tired of the quiet ways and simple pursuits of the inmates of the old baronial hall.

At times, I felt like an intruder, when I caught myself sitting with eyes riveted upon the pages of some musty, old volume of strange adventure in far-away lands, while the elder baron, the gracious baroness, my loving mother, and several cousins from the neighboring estate, gave themselves up to the sweet pleasures of the fireside, feasting upon honey-cake, drinking hot spiced wine, playing at draughts, dominoes, or cards, now chat-

ting in the most animated manner of the trivial things of every-day life, now bursting out into uproarious laughter at some unexpected victory won at cards or at some fireside game.

Silently closing my book, and still more silently stealing away, I sought the quiet of my apartments, where, with no other companions, save faithful Bulger, I gave myself up to unrestrained indulgence in waking dreams of life in a storm-rocked ship, landings on strange shores, parleyings with curious beings, battling with the wild-visaged typhoon, or hurrying with sails close-reefed and hatches battened down, to gain a safe port ere the storm king's ebon chargers could rattle their hoofs over our heads.

My dear mother, the gracious baroness, made extraordinary exertions to drive away my low spirits.

Knowing my fondness for coffee cake, she suffered no one to make it for me excepting herself. And at dinner she took care to place a professor or some learned person beside me, so that I might not find myself condemned to silence for the want of a gifted mind to measure mental swords with.

But all to no purpose. I grew daily more taciturn, absent-minded, and plunged into meditation. With my eyes fixed upon vacancy, I sat like one with unbalanced mind amidst the lightest-hearted merrymakers. In vain the company besought me to relate past adventures, to tell them tales already thrice told. I only shook my head with a mournful smile, and made good my escape from scenes which were painful to me.

Bulger felt that his little master was suffering, and coaxed with plaintive whining to have me make known to him the cause of my grief.

His joy was wild and boisterous when he saw my body-servant enter my apartments, bearing an empty traveling chest upon his shoulders.

To tell the truth, life at the baronial hall pleased Bulger not a whit more than it did me.

The house dogs annoyed him with their attentions, and he was wont to retire from the dining hall with a look of utter disgust upon his face, when one of the family cats, in the

most friendly spirit, drew near and tasted a bit of his dinner.

All caresses, too, from other hands than mine were distasteful to him; and, although for my sake he would permit the gracious baroness to stroke his silken ears, yet any familiarity on the part of the elder baron was firmly, but respectfully, declined.

The very moment I saw my chests placed here and there in my apartments, my spirits rose. I became like another being. The color returned to my cheeks, the gleam to my eye, the old-time ring to my voice.

From lip to lip, the word was passed: "The little baron is making ready for another journey!"

From early morn to deepening shadows of twilight, I busied myself with superintending the packing of my boxes. It was a labor of love with me.

I never was born for a calm life beneath the time-stained tiles of paternal halls! My heart was filled with redder, warmer blood than ordinary mortals. My brain never slept. Night and day, shadowy forms of men and things, strange and curious, swept along before me in never-ending files.

One morning, while at work with my boxes, a low knock at my chamber door fell upon my ear. Bulger, scenting an enemy, gave a low growl. I swung the door open. It was the elder baron.

"Honored father," I cried gayly, "act as if thou wert master here! Be sad, be gay; sit, stand, drink, eat, or fast!"

"Little baron," began my father in a solemn voice, "I beseech thee give over thy jesting. When thou hast heard the object of my visit, grief will chase every vestige of mirth from thy light heart."

"Speak baron!"

"Art thou a dutiful and loving son?" asked my father, fixing his dark, mournful eyes full upon me.

"I am!"

"'Tis well!" he replied "then arrest this making ready to to abandon thy parents in their hour of misfortune. Put an end to all this unseemly hurlyburly, and to thy longing to be gone from beneath the paternal roof."

The clouded face, trembling and tear-filled eyes of the elder baron shocked me. I could feel the blood leaving my cheeks, where, till then, it had bloomed like the glow of ripening fruit.

But I checked myself; and, motioning the baron to be seated, said in a calm—though spite of me—trembling voice:

"Noble father, it is thine to command; mine to obey! Speak, I pray thee, and speak too, plainly—if need be, harshly. Bare thy most secret thoughts. What aileth thee? What sends these dark shadows to rest on that calm, smooth brow?"

"Thanks, little baron," was my father's reply," for thy promise of obedience. This is the weight which presses on my heart: Since thou hast taken up this rambling, roving life, robbed of thy counsel and co-operation, I have seen our ancestral estate hastening to ruin. Last year our tenantry scarcely harvested enough to keep body and soul together. This year promises to turn out worse yet. Desolation sits upon the broad acres once the prize of our family! Crops fail, grass withers, trees turn yellow! The poor cattle moan for sustenance as they wander about in the dried-up pastures. I look upon all this wreck and ruin, but am helpless as a babe to stay it! Speak, my son; wilt thou, hast thou the heart, canst thou be so cruel as to turn thy back upon these pitiful scenes without raising thy hand to avert the impending doom?"

"Baron!" I interposed mildly, but firmly, "facts first! eloquence thereafter! Impart unto me, in plain, King's speech, the cause of all this ruin! What hath wrought it? What hath desolated our fair fields? What hath carried this rapine among our flocks and herds? Speak!"

"I will, little baron, give attentive ear!" rejoined my father with stately bend of the body:

"As ancient Egypt was visited with scourge and plague, so have been our ancestral acres! In pasture and grain fields, myriads of moles feed upon the tender rootlets; in grass lands, swarms of meadow-mice fatten on the herbage; in orchards and nurseries, countless numbers of ground-squirrels spread destruction far and near! Such are the terrible scourges now laying waste our once fair estates, your pride and mine, and the envy of all beholders!

"Little baron, I feel, I know that thou canst help me; that somewhere in the vast storehouse of thy mind, rest plans and devices potent enough to restore these broad lands to all their former beauty and productiveness."

"Baron!" was my reply, "when was there a time that thou foundst me wanting in my duty to thee or lacking in power to assist thee?"

"Never!" ejaculated the elder baron with great emphasis.

"Then, betake thee to my gentle mother—the baroness—thy consort, comfort her. Bid her take heart! Say I will not go abroad until these pests are driven from our ancestral domain!"

The elder baron rose. I accompanied him to the door, then, we saluted each other with dignity and he withdrew to bear the glad message of my promised assistance to my sorrowing mother.

Alone in my apartments, a terrible feeling of disappointment came over me. I felt that it would be useless to continue in my preparations to leave home in the face of these dire misfortunes now threatening my family. For, as I reasoned—and I think with great clearness—the name of our family would dwindle to a shadow, were we robbed of these broad acres of pasture and meadow-land, forest and orchard.

To me, a landless nobleman had something very ludicrous about him; and I fully made up my mind that I would either save my ancestral estate from ruin, or lay aside forever my title of baron, as a gem which had lost its radiance, even as a pearl, which the stolid rustic ruins for the sake of a meal of victuals!

That night I partook of no food, so that I might lie down with unclouded mind.

Bulger noticing this, concluded that his little master was ailing, and likewise refused to touch food, although I ordered his favorite dish—roasted cocks' combs—to be prepared.

Till midnight I lay awake in deepest thought over the arduous task which confronted me. At the stroke of twelve from the old clock on the stair, I determined to let my mind work out the problem itself, and turned over and went to sleep.

The baron and baroness entered the breakfast-room with

unclouded brows the next morning. I greeted them very cordially. The conversation was enlivened by one or two of the elder baron's ancient anecdotes which he furbished up for the occasion with several new characters and an entirely new ending. I laughed heartily—as I was in duty bound to do.

Breakfast over Bulger and I sallied forth to begin work. I resolved to attack the moles first.

To get rid of pest number one was not at all a difficult matter for me, when once I set about thinking it over. In fact, I may say right here, that this task, set me by the elder baron, would have been an impossible one had it not been for my intimate acquaintance with the natures, habits and peculiarities of animal life. Always a close student of natural history there was little about the four-footed tenants of the fields which had escaped my observation.

Accompanied by Bulger; armed with a pair of short, wooden tongs; and carrying a basket, I set out for the grain fields.

Bulger was in high glee for he had already made up his mind that there was sport ahead for him.

In less than an hour, with him to point out their hiding places and to unearth them, I had captured a hundred moles. Returning to the overseer's lodge, with his help I cut off the nails of each mole's fore feet close to the flesh and then gave orders to have the lot carried back to the grain fields and released. Turning my attention now to the meadow-mice, I realized at once that to get rid of pest number two would be the most difficult task of all.

The unthinking reader has doubtless already cried out in thought: "Why not turn a troop of cats into the meadows, and let them make short work of the destructive little creatures?"

Ah how easy it is to plan, how difficult to execute! Know then, my clever friend, that the meadows were wet and that though often tried the cats absolutely refused to enter them.

The merest tyro in natural history is aware of a cat's aversion to wetting its fur; and, above all, of stepping into water. Even moisture is disagreeable to a cat's feet and she will willingly walk a mile rather than cross a plot of dew-moistened green

sward. However, I determined to begin my operations at once.

Knowing the wonderful changes which the pangs of hunger will work in an animal's nature, forcing the meat-eaters to turn to the herbage of the field for sustenance—I hoped for favorable results.

Selecting half a dozen vigorous young cats from the cottages of our tenantry, and providing myself with a lot of India rubber caps used for drawing down over the necks of bottles, in order to make them air-tight, I proceeded to encase the legs of each cat in these coverings, cutting a hole in each one, however, so as to allow the paws to pass through. I wished to accustom them to these leggings before covering the feet entirely. My next step was to subject the cats to twenty-four hours fast. After which, I caused some of their favorite food—broiled fish to be placed at the other end of a long room, covering the intervening space with long-napped rugs, which I had first dipped into water.

In spite of their hunger, they absolutely refused to cross the dripping rugs.

Advancing to the edge, they tested the condition of the obstacles which blocked their advance upon the savory food feeling here and there for a dry spot; and then retreating with piteous mewing, as they shook the wet from their feet.

Drawing the rubber caps completely over the feet of one of the cats, I now placed her on the wet rug, encouraging her to remain there by feeding her a few dainty bits of the fish. Finding that her feet did not get wet, she consented to walk here and there over the wet surface, in order to secure toothsome bits of food. I made the same experiment with the other cats, and everything went as well as I could wish.

The next day I continued my instruction, and to my great joy, succeeded in schooling the whole lot, not only to make no objection to having their feet encased in the rubber boots, but even to wade through an inch or more of water, in order to secure a particularly dainty bit of food.

I was now ready to make a practical test of my trained hunters.

The day preceding the trial they were again subjected to a prolonged fast.

I must frankly confess that my heart beat rather nervously as I, with the overseer and two other assistants set out for the low lands, carrying the trained mousers—already shod in their rubber boots—in three baskets.

We advanced cautiously upon the meadow-land, but so far as the mice were concerned, our caution was useless, for they ran about under our very feet.

As I stood gazing over the long stretch of devastated meadow-land, once so famous for its thick, velvety grass, the tears gathered in my eyes and my voice choked. Now or never, thought I, must the attempt be made to save these fair fields from utter ruin. At a wave of my hand, my assistants stooped and released the somewhat startled cats. They were not long, however, in collecting their wits and getting ready for business.

Sharp hunger is an excellent sauce! As the six monsters leaped among those troops of tiny creatures—till that moment nibbling, playing or teasing one another, without a thought of harm or danger—the wildest consternation seized upon them.

Not only near by us, but as far as the eye could reach, panic and disorder spread among these, till then peaceful little beings. Those which sought safety in their holes were hurled back by others rushing frantically out into the open air.

The cats kept at their work like avenging furies. They killed for the mere pleasure of killing, passing like a death-dealing blast here and there over the meadows.

After the work of destruction had been kept up for half an hour, I directed that the trained six should be carried back to their quarters, for I was too good a general to let my troops get their fill of sack and plunder.

The next day another attack was made upon the enemy. The trained six, if anything, spread death right and left with greater fury than at first. The wet lands no longer had any terrors for them. They splashed through the puddles like mischievous boys through roadside brooks and ponds.

I now bethought me of turning my attention to the ground

squirrels. My first step was to send to town for several bushels of the smallest marbles that could be purchased. Then, having, with the assistance of my ever-faithful and loving friend and helper—my dear, dumb brother Bulger—located the whereabouts of several hundred burrows of the ground-squirrels, I gave orders to have a half-dozen or more of the marbles rolled down into each one of those holes.

These labors completed, I withdrew to my apartments and set about amusing myself in several ways, while awaiting a report from the overseer.

Many of the tenants who had watched my operations against the moles, meadow-mice and ground-squirrels, even ventured openly to denounce them as "wild whims" "a dreamer's ideas" "silly workings of a diseased mind."

Poor creatures! They had lost their all. They had seen the labor of long weary months ruined by these pests. They were embittered and skeptical. I had not the heart to notice their rather impertinent utterances. While awaiting the developments, I plunged into the delights of some tales of a bold traveler written in the ancient Assyrian tongue in the wedge-shaped letter.

Three days went by and no news from the superintendent!

Two more, made five full days!

On the sixth came nothing.

At last, with the dawn of the seventh I was awakened by loud and long continued cheering beneath my windows. Springing from my bed and drawing aside the curtains, I was astonished to see long lines of our tenantry, men, women and children bearing banners, wreaths, garlands, etc.

One company of children carried long, thin rods from the end of which dangled dead moles, meadow-mice and ground-squirrels.

The moment I presented myself at the window, there was an outburst of cheering, so sturdy that the windows rattled before it. A tap at my door called me in another direction. It was the elder baron!

"Haste! little baron!" he cried eagerly "descend to the castle platform, the people are beside themselves with joy! Canst

thou catch their cries? Not a mole, nor a mouse, nor a squirrel is alive on the broad acres of thy estate. I say "thy" because it is justly thine! Thou hast saved it from utter ruin. Henceforth for the few years which kind Providence may will that I should tarry with thee, let it be as thy guest."

"Nay, nay, baron!" I replied laughingly, "that may not be! Till thou sleepest with the noble dead of our long and honored line, thou art master here!"

I pressed his hand reverently to my lips and sent him to talk to the people until I should be ready to take my place at his side.

I can well fancy how impatient the reader is to hear something more about the manner in which I rid my ancestral estate of these noisome pests. With regard to the meadow-mice that needs no explanation, but, the disappearance of the moles and ground—squirrels seems somewhat mysterious.

Well and good. I'll make it clear! Gentle reader, if you had been as close a student of the natures and habits of these animals as I, you could have done the same thing yourself. You must know, then, that the mole's body bears about the same relation to his forefeet, as a boiler does to a steam engine, which is admirably adjusted in all its parts, working smoothly and noiselessly, like a thing of life—polished and beautiful in all its bearings and put together so skillfully that no human thought could better it. That is to say, the only wonderful thing about a mole is his hand.

That is a delight to a student of natural history.

I have sat for hours and studied the marvelous shape of this hand. And strange though it may seem to you, no one knows better than the mole himself, that therein lies his hold on life.

You'll bear in mind, that I caused the nails to be clipped off the forefeet of the hundred moles, close to the flesh, and then turned them loose. In other words, without absolutely destroying their marvellous hands, I completely destroyed their usefulness.

Now another thing you must be taught, that in the busy communities of these little animals, there are no sluggards. Every one must work. Only one thing stops him from using his hands.

That is death. When a mole sees his fellow stop work, he knows what has happened

Upon the return of the hundred captives to their burrows, there was joy mingled with terror!

Whose turn might come next?

But, when the moment arrived to fall into line and set to work, there was consternation!

What! alive, and not able to dig?

Immediately, the wildest panic seizes upon the community. They abandon their homes! With frantic haste, they pierce new burrows in every direction, leaving their ill-fated companions behind them to die a lingering death—literally buried alive. Weeks, months will elapse ere they recover from this wild fear. Then they will be miles away.

And the ground-squirrels, you ask. The ground-squirrel is as conceited, inquisitive, persistent and hard-headed as he is hard-toothed. If he knew that the world was round he would claim that it was simply a huge nut and wish that he were big enough to get at its kernel.

When the marbles first came rolling down his burrow, he was pleased. They were so smooth, so round! He rolled them hither and thither, as content as a child with a new toy. Then he stored them away for another day's amusement. Pretty soon he began to tire of them. They were dreadfully in his way. They annoyed him greatly. And yet, he couldn't bear to think of parting with them. Finally the question arose in his mind: What are they, anyway? Surely they must have a kernel! And so he set to work gnawing upon them. They were terribly hard, but he was determined to get at the pit. Day after day, he kept at the thankless task, gnawing, gnawing, until, one fine morning, he awoke to make the awful discovery that his teeth were gone!

Now, a ground-squirrel may be said to consist of four teeth, and nothing else. These gone there is no way to keep the other part alive.

True, he may, after infinite labor struggle through a nutshell, but it is too slow work to keep up his strength. Every nut becomes a harder task.

And so it was with the vast colony in our orchards. The first few days quite a number made their appearance as usual. Then, fewer and fewer came out of their holes, and they looked thin and feeble and showed no inclination to gambol and chatter. At the end of the week, the work was done. They had wrought their own destruction. The entire colony had perished from starvation.

Thus it was, I restored the fair lands of our family to their old-time productiveness and removed all the obstacles which stood between me and my immediate departure from home.

In a few days all was ready.

The elder baron and the gracious baroness, my mother, parted from me with a gentle rain of tears, and a refreshing shower of blessings. Accompanied by my dumb brother—the ever faithful Bulger—and one trusty servant, I set out by extra post for Vienna.

Thence at break-neck speed, I journeyed to Buda-Pesth and reached the Black Sea via Bucharest.

Traversing that body of water in a swift vessel, commanded by an old sailing-master of mine, I skirted the foot hills of the Caucasus Mountains, and made my way to Teheran.

Here I tarried several days, long enough to purchase a few camels and horses and join a caravan, soon to leave that city on a trading expedition.

The proprietor of the trading company renewed his welcome in heartier terms when he was informed that I had brought a goodly collection of European trinkets with me.

To clinch his good will—so to speak—I gave him a pair of fine German pistols.

We were now sworn friends.

I remained with the expedition until it reached Cabul. The proprietor was astounded to learn that I did not contemplate returning westward with him. After a whole day spent in eloquent pleadings, he gave in, fell upon my neck, wept, and wished me good speed.

I was glad to be rid of him, for I was in no humor to form friendships with men whose souls never rose above a sharp

bargain. Attended only by my faithful Bulger and a single guide, I set out from Cabul; crossed northern Hindoostan, and entered Thibet to the north of the Himalayas.

This was the land of which I had long dreamed—a land absolutely unknown to the outside world.

I never had any inclination to pass over beaten tracks. By nature and education, a lover of the strange and marvellous, my soul expanded beneath the skies of this far-away and curious land, like a flower beneath the sunlight of a warm May morning.

Scarcely had I penetrated more than a dozen leagues into this wild untrodden territory than I made the astonishing discovery that the sun's light was obscured the entire day; while the sky, by night, was flooded with a soft, mysterious light, quite bright enough to enable me to read the finest print with perfect ease. In other words, the natural order of things was exactly reversed. So, I—always quick to accommodate myself to existing circumstances—made use of the dark days for rest and sleep, and pursued my journey by night.

One morning, however, the mystery was explained. The impenetrable clouds, which had been veiling the heavens like a pall, suddenly sank earthward; and, to my almost unspeakable astonishment, I discovered that this blanket of inky blackness was made up of living creatures—gigantic fire-flies, quite as large as our ordinary bat, and far blacker in both body and wing.

When night came, this living tissue was changed into a robe of sparkling, shimmering glow, mantling the heavens like a garment of burnished gold spangles, upon which a burst of soft light, as if from ten times ten thousand waxen tapers, fell in dazzling effulgence. It was something to see and die for. Bulger's poor startled mind made him look up, half in dread, half in wonder at this mysterious fire, which enveloped everything in its flame, and yet consumed nothing. I had but one thought. It was to capture several of these huge fire-flies. Night after night I watched patiently for an opportunity.

It came at last.

I was preparing some coffee, and my back was turned. Suddenly, I was startled by a piteous outburst, half whine, half bark, from poor Bulger. A cluster of these living stars had fallen at his very feet. Quicker than thought, I sprang forward and threw my blanket over them. Then, with the greatest care, I transferred them to one of my wicker hampers.

Bulger, upon seeing this basket on fire and yet feeling no heat, was most painfully nonplused. He walked round and round the improvised cage, keeping at a safe distance, however, now sniffing the air, now looking up to me with a most imploring glance—as if to say:

"Dear little master, do explain this thing to me! Why doesn't it burn up?"

To my great disappointment, the three captives died after a few days' imprisonment, not, however, until they had laid a number of eggs—about the size of robins' eggs—which I packed away most carefully in my boxes of specimens.

I may say, right here, that, upon my return home, I subjected these eggs to a gentle warmth and was charmed to see emerge from each one of them a larva about the size of a pipe-stem; but, to my delight—and to Bulger's absolute terror—this pipe-stem affair had, inside twenty-four hours, become as large round as a Frankfort sausage.

In due time, they passed into the chrysalis state. But this apparent death seemed to become a real one.

Weeks went by and there were no signs of a metamorphosis. I was cruelly disappointed.

More important matters, however, arose to occupy my thoughts. The sleeping fire-flies of the Orient were quite forgotten, when, one evening, the women servants of the manor house, with blanched faces and piercing shrieks came literally tumbling headlong down the main stairway.

Fortunately I was sitting on the first terrace of the park. With a bound I gained the hall-way, and snatching down a brace of fire-arms from the wall, throw myself in front of the wildly shrieking troop of women, calling out in stentorian tones, for silence.

"Has murder been committed?" I cried, "Is there revolt among the tenantry? Has blood been shed?"

No! no! little baron!" they exclaimed, with wild eyes and clasped hands, "but the castle is on fire! Your rooms are in flames! Your treasures will be consumed! Quick! little baron; save them! save us! save the gracious lady and venerable master!"

Quicker than it takes to tell it, I laid hold of the rope of the alarm bell and set it pealing.

The retainers answered with a will. A score of them burst into the hall-way ready for the word of command.

"Seize the fire-buckets, my lads!" I called out calmly, but in a tone of sufficient dignity to inspire perfect confidence, "Man ladders to the windows of my apartments."

By this time another gang of the tenantry came rushing in upon the scene. I met them with an order to unhang the portraits in the baronial dining-hall, and store them in a place of safety. Then, having spoken a few words of comfort to the gracious baroness, my mother, I seized a fire-bucket and led the line up the stairway. Laying my shoulder against the door of my apartments, I burst it open; and, with head lowered before the blaze of light dashed in, followed by the bucket-bearers.

"Halt!" I cried.

It was too late! some of my finest hangings and rugs were spoiled by half a dozen buckets of water emptied upon them.

The mystery was solved! The blaze of light that fairly flooded my apartments proceeded from the huge fire-flies which had hatched out without being noticed by me. But I didn't begrudge my ruined hangings.

There was my recompense clinging to the walls.

I need hardly say, that the giant fire-flies were the wonder of their day, and brief as it was it sufficed to cover my name with a glory as resplendent, as their mysterious fire.

I caused a huge lamp of exquisite oriental pattern to be constructed, and having placed the light-bearers beneath its dome of polished glass, passed several nights in the most perfect happiness, seated in its soft, white light, poring over musty

THE LITTLE BARON READING BY THE LIGHT OF THE GIGANTIC FIRE-FLIES.

volumes of travel, written in tongues long-forgotten, save by a few of the most learned scholars. But, my delight was short-lived. The gigantic fire-flies absolutely refused to eat anything, although I tempted them with a hundred different kinds of food. Little by little, their mysterious flame lost its bright effulgence — burning lower and lower until it went out in death.

* * * * * *

To resume the thread of my story:

I was growing impatient to reach the table-lands of the Himalayas, and taxed the powers of endurance of my guide to their uttermost.

In our bivouacs at times he would encircle my slender ankle-joints with his thumb and index finger and exclaim: "All the gods helped make thee, little baron!" meaning that there dwelt great will-power and strength in my small body.

The skies now cleared up. The living pall rolled backward, toward the horizon, and naught remained to tell of the mighty flood of light which so lately overran the heavens save a faint shimmering streak of fire in far distant Western sky.

Soon it went out altogether. Thus far, our journey had been through an open country, with here and there a clump of forest trees which, at last grew so frequent that I felt sure we must be approaching the confines of some extensive piece of woodland.

In this I was not mistaken.

As we reached the summit of a range of hills, I could see in the distance a long, dark line of forests. My guide, who had pushed on ahead, in search of water, came galloping wildly back.

I paid no particular attention to him, until I noticed that he had dismounted in great haste and was running towards me.

"Turn back! turn back! little master!" he exclaimed, throwing himself at my feet, and clasping my legs with his arms!

"Enter not in the Palin-mâ-Talin!" (Home of Darkness.) A hundred pilgrims have laid their bones in the moss-grown depths of the Great Gloomy Forest! It is as pathless as the

ocean! It is as silent as death. It is as limitless as the heavens! Nor man nor beast can breathe its cool, moist air, and live! Turn back! I beseech thee, little baron; tempt not the Palin-mâ-Talin!"

"Palin-mâ-Talin! Palin-mâ-Talin!" I repeated, as if awakening from a dream, "why, it must be—ay, there can be no doubt of it—the Great Aryan Forest, in which, countless centuries ago, the human race having abandoned their holes in the clay banks, first learned to hunt the wild beast, feed on his flesh and clothe themselves in his skins."

In my joy at this discovery I threw a handful of gold pieces into the lap of my astonished guide.

Bulger, always ready to share my happiness, came bounding to my side, barking loud and shrill. To my infinite surprise, the answering bark of a dog came floating on the morning breeze.

"Hark!" I exclaimed, in a whisper. This time it was unmistakable.

"'Tis one of Benè-agâ's dogs!" was my guide's reply "Come, little master, let me lead thee to his cave. It is beneath the very shadow of the Great Gloomy Forest. He can tell thee of its dangers, for he hath crossed it!"

"And come safely back?" I asked.

"While life lasts he will sit in the gloom of Palin-mâ-Talin!" murmured the man.

"What meanest thou?" I cried.

"I mean, that the noon-day sun cannot chase the shadows from his eyes."

"He is blind?"

"Ay, little master, blind!" was the guide's reply, "and yet save this blind hermit, there lives no human creature who can lead thee safely through the Great Gloomy Forest!"

"Have done with thy jesting!" I cried.

"Nay, little master!" was the man's answer. "I speak in all truth and reverence, for Benè-agâ is a holy man, and in him dwells such a radiant spirit, that his path is illumined and his footsteps are sure when other men would walk to their detruction!"

"O, lead me to him!" I exclaimed with ill-concealed joy. "A thousand pieces of gold are thine, if the blind hermit consents to be my guide."

"A thousand pieces of gold!" repeated the guide with a gleam in his dark eyes. "Ah, little baron, no one can earn that princely reward, excepting thee thyself! Who am I, poor, miserable, ignorant slave that I am, that I should attempt to move this saintly and learned man in thy behalf? He would heed the cry of one of his dogs far more quickly than he would my chatter!"

"Is he so unlike his kind," I asked, as we rode slowly along, "as not to love gold?"

"Ay, little baron! if every dried leaf in his forest path were a coin of burnished gold, he would not stoop to pick one up!"

"Are his ears closed to flattery?"

"As closed as his eyes are to the sun's rays."

"Loves he not some savory dish?"

"Fruits and berries content him!"

"Surely a draught of rare old wine, mellow with age, fragrant as crushed roses, purple within the beaker, would warm his heart to quicker beating, and incline him to serve me!"

"Nay, nay, little baron! a gourd full of water from the sparkling rill near his home in the rocks, is sweeter to him than any nectar ever distilled by the hands of man!"

"They say he is learned! Then shall my gift be a score of rare old books, priceless parchments filled with thoughts so noble, so deep, so subtle, that, to read therein, means to live a thousand years in one!"

"Ah, little master," replied my guide, with a mournful smile, "thou art still astray. This dweller 'mid the rocks, this lover of solitude, the measure of whose life, they say, is full three hundred years, knows no other books than the pages of his own soul! On these he has turned his thoughts so long and so diligently, that the foolish outpourings of so-called authors seem like the merest prattle of childhood."

"But look, little master, we are drawing near the home of the blind hermit."

I turned my eyes in the direction indicated.

A rocky ledge, wild, craggy, broken, seamed and twisted, crowned with a growth of pine trees having knotted, gnarled and fantastically-shaped trunks and boughs, shut in our view. As we drew near the entrance to Benè-agâ's cave, a troop of dogs, of various ages and species, came bounding forward with loud barkings.

Bulger advanced to meet them boldly, after first glancing at my face to see whether I objected or not.

It was a long while since he had met any of the members of his race, and then again, he doubtless wished to get a good look at these residents of such a distant land.

The feeling seemed to be mutual, for in an instant the barking ceased, and the hermit's dogs gathered about Bulger in silent wonderment.

After a series of salutations, which plainly ended in the best of fellowships, the hermit's dogs endeavored to lure Bulger away for a run in the forest and fields, but in this they were, I need scarcely say, entirely unsuccessful. Bulger gave them to understand in very decided terms that he would talk with them, and even romp with them, but that it must all be done under the eyes of his master.

We now halted and dismounted.

"This is the place," said my guide in a low tone. "Through that deep fissure in the rocks thou wilt find a path that leads to Benè-agâ's cave. Enter it boldly, little master. At the entrance to the cave thou wilt find a dried gourd hanging on the rocky wall. Seize it! When shaken, its seeds will give forth a loud, rattling sound. This done, move not, though the shadows of evening find thee still standing at the door of Benè-agâ's cave. Farewell, little master; Heaven make good to thee tenfold thy kindness to me! I will await thee three days. If by that time I do not hear thy voice calling me to serve thee again, I shall return to my kindred!"

Advancing to the cleft in the rocky wall, I found the gourd hanging by a leathern thong.

The loud rattling of the seeds, as it broke the deep silence

of this wild and lonely place—fit vestibule to a temple devoted to silence, solitude and meditation—startled me painfully.

Restoring the gourd to its place, I leaned forward to catch the faintest sound of the hermit's voice which might reach my ear.

It came not.

The silence grew more oppressive than before.

The broken, twisted rocks, overhanging and surrounding me, took on fantastic forms.

In every dark cavity I saw some misshapen creature stirring about.

A dreadful feeling of loneliness crept over me.

No sound came, save the loud throbbing of my own heart.

A half hour went by!

Benè-agâ spake not a word.

"Perhaps he sleeps!" I whispered to myself.

My words awakened the echoes of the rocky recesses, and the word "sleeps" came back to my ears in a hundred different tones, now loud and hissing, now soft and sibilant.

At last a full hour had now gone by since I had rattled the seeds of the dried gourd, and yet the blind hermit spake no word.

Again the death-like stillness sank upon the place, and the gathering shadows grew deeper and deeper.

Could the guide have played me false? I asked myself.

Nay, that cannot be!

And yet why comes there no sound from Benè-agâ's cave?

Shall I summon him once more? May he not have gone forth to gather food?

Am I doomed to be turned back when I have reached the very threshold of my long-wished-for desire?

These and a hundred other questions flitted through my mind as I stood in the dark and gloomy corridor that led to Benè-agâ's cave.

By the shadows on the rocky wall I could see that I had now been standing at least two hours awaiting summons to draw nearer.

But hush!

He speaks at last!

My heart bounded joyfully, and yet as if with a leaden weight upon it.

"Who is it that disturbs my meditation?" were the hermit's words.

"A stranger! A brother! One who needs thy guidance!" I replied in a firm, yet humble tone.

"No human creature is stranger to me! Thou art too young to be my brother! The light that is left me shines only for my own feet!" came slowly from the hermit's cave in a full, deep, rich voice.

"True, great master," I replied, "but then, may I not be thy son, and follow thy footsteps?"

"Thou art very wise for thy years," spake Benè-agâ.

"Not so wise, great master," was my reply, "as I shall be when I have sat at thy feet."

"Come somewhat closer; thy child-voice sounds like an echo," continued the blind hermit. "And yet thou art not a child! Some great spirit plays in sportive mood behind thy face! I see that thou art blue-eyed and flaxen-haired. Thine eyes are set wide asunder, and above them towers a dome of thought. Thy home is in the land of the Norseman. At least thy fathers dwelt there. On thy cheek glows the crimson which, in the peach and apple-land, stains the autumn foliage!"

As I had not yet even stepped within Benè-agâ's cave, these words of the blind hermit caused a strange feeling, half of fear, half of dread fascination, to creep over me.

My heart throbbed violently.

His ear, far keener than birds' or beasts', caught the sound.

"Fear not, little one!" said he, in deep, rich tones, full and swelling like the voice of organ pipes, "if thou canst content thyself with a handful of berries when thou art hungry, with a draught from the neighboring rill when thou art thirsty; if thy young limbs are sturdy enough to wrest repose from a rocky couch, then art thou welcome! If not, go thy way! For twenty years I've been busy with a certain problem, and have no time to stop and spread a more bountiful repast!"

"But season thy frugal fare with thy wisdom, great master," I returned, "and it will be sweeter to my palate than stall-fed ox and mellow wine."

"Come somewhat nearer, little traveler, so that I may see thee better!" spake the blind hermit, kindly and gently.

I did not wait for further summons, but stepped boldly into Benè-agâ's cave.

It was, in truth, little more than a lofty cleft in the rocks, with several deeper recesses, in which the shadows lay undisturbed. Its roof of jagged, broken and blackened masses of stone, was arched and lofty. In and about it, flocks of small swallow-like birds nested, and at times broke out in musical twitterings. Barren, gloomy and utterly forlorn as the place was, without chair, mat, bed or blanket, every thought of its awful loneliness and abject surroundings vanished from my mind, as I fixed my eyes upon its occupant.

As I had stepped within the limit of Benè-agâ's cave, he had slowly risen from his bench of stone, and now stood erect before me. Of powerful build, tall and majestic, with long snow-white hair and snowy beard, he towered like a statue of Parian marble in the dim twilight, to which now, however, my eyes had become accustomed.

I gazed upon him, half in fear, half in delight.

I could feel my breath coming fast and faster, as I riveted my gaze upon his wonderful face, so full of love, patience, courage and contentment.

Had he bent his eyes upon me, I would never have believed him blind, for they were unclouded, full and lustrous. And yet, on second look, I saw that their gleam was like the brightness of the polished gem, that lacks the softness of living, sensitive orbs.

Benè-agâ was clad in a rude garb of dried skins, from which the hair had been skilfully scraped. Tossed back from his broad and massive brow, his white locks hung in heavy ringlets on his broad shoulders, while his wonderful beard, as white and glistening as spun glass—around his body twice entwined —clung like a snow-wreath twisted about a sturdy oak by the circling gale.

BENÈ-AGA, THE BLIND GUIDE.

So, like a mighty son of earth he towered, rude, yet noble; untaught yet learned, human yet godlike that I stood transfixed. My tongue forgot its tricks of speech. I felt that I should turn to stone, if he did not speak to me.

While standing thus speechless, robbed of power to move a limb, Bulger broke the spell!

At Benè-agâ's feet lay a sick dog, infirm thro' age and not ailment; blind like his master, his head pillowed on some soft dry leaves—the only semblance of bed within the hermit's cave.

Bulger's gaze fell upon this pitiful spectacle. With cautious step, outstretched neck, and wide-opened eyes, he approached his sick brother, sniffed him over, licked his face and ears, whined piteously and then fixed a pleading look upon me as if to ask: "Dear little master, canst thou do nothing to help my poor, sick brother? Canst thou not make him well again, so that I may coax him out into the warm sunshine to play with him?"

Benè-agâ spake: "I see that thou art not alone, little wanderer, thou bringest a companion with thee. He is welcome. His tenderness and sympathy will carry joy and gladness to the heart of my suffering friend, whose head I've pillowed upon some soft grass! I, too, love dogs! Thou seest they are my sole companions. Their love is less exacting than human love. They require no pledge or promise. They understand my silence, read my thoughts and are content!"

"But, come! little traveler, time presses. Speak! What brings thee to Benè-agâ's cave? If it be idle curiosity, depart! But, if thou seekest counsel; if thou comest with honest intent to ask my advice in some arduous matter, I am ready to serve thee!"

"I thank thee, great master!" I replied, humbly. "Know then that I would traverse the Great Gloomy Forest and that report hath reached mine ear that thou alone, of all human beings, canst guide me through its never-lifting shadows, shield me from its poisonous vapors and let me not follow my own foot-prints in ever-widening circles, until reason itself feels the dreaded spell of that vast, trackless, pathless wilderness!"

"'Tis true!" gave answer Benè-agâ in deep, sad tones. "I can perform the service thou askest! But, O, my son! thou must know that a most sacred vow holds me in its mysterious power, securely locked, that I should lead no fellow-creature through that pathless wood, save on certain conditions!"

"Name them, great master!" I cried.

"That he who asks this service," continued Benè-agâ, "shall tarry thirty days and nights with me in my rocky home, to inure him to the burden of awful gloom and silence; that he, in all that time, taste of no food save the berries, on which I feed; slake his thirst with no draught other than that which I bring him from the neighboring rill and sleep on the bare rock, even as I do! Reflect! the apprenticeship is severe. Deem it not dishonorable, nor weak, to shrink from so hard a task! Pause, reflect, ere thou answerest. I'll resume my meditations for an hour and then question thee again!"

"Be it so, great master!" I made answer; and, Benè-agâ's sightless eyes seem to turn to the shrunken form of the dying dog.

Silence filled the cave, and feeble twilight struggled against the gathering gloom. My thoughts turned homewards! I could hear the gentle voice of the baroness, my mother. The castle windows were lighted, and the tall lindens shook a rich perfume from their blossoming boughs. All seemed so sweet and peaceful. My mother's voice reached me—I caught its every word: "Set forth my son's repast!" said she in soft, mild tones. "See that his favorite dishes are kept warm. Choose none but the choicest wine for him; and, take good care that his bed be soft and even, and his pillows smooth!" My breath came only with painful effort as these words rang in my ears.

I started up with a bound. In spite of myself, I took a step toward the portal of Benè-agâ's cave, where the last rays of the setting sun tipped the angry, jagged, broken rocks with gold.

"Well, my son!" spake the blind hermit. "Art thou still resolute?"

"Ay, great master!" I cried, turning back and drawing near to him.

"Fear naught! Though puny in body, yet was I born with the strength of steel in my limbs, and the will power of a score of common men."

"Lead thou on! I will follow thee."

A faint smile spread over the noble countenance of the blind hermit, as he replied:

"I have not told thee all, my son! Till we pass from these walls of stone, and stand in the open air, thou must not speak a word aloud. Nay, nor in a whisper, either. I will set thy food and drink before thee, and that," he continued, pointing to a projecting shelf of rock, "shall be thy bed! On its bare surface, rest thy limbs when nature bids thee sleep. Art thou still resolute?"

"Ay, great master!" I replied with loud and bouyant voice, "I will do thy bidding!"

"'Tis well!" said Benè-agâ. "I like thy brave and steadfast soul! But hold me not hard of heart in condemning thee to this gloom and silence! Temper the bitterness of thy fate by giving thyself over to deep and earnest meditation, during the few brief hours that it shall last. Forget the so-called world—a bubble that bursts when thou thinkest to grasp it; a shadow, which thou pursuest with eager pace, and yet canst never overtake; a mirage, rising before the weary traveler's gaze, with visions of delicious gardens, watered by limpid rills and cooled by sparkling fountains, only to melt away and leave him more weak and fainting than before. Look within thyself! Thou art the temple of an immortal soul! Enter its portals! Fix thine eyes on the mysterious writings there unrolled! Grow not weary and discouraged if thou canst not decipher their meaning as easily as thou wouldst the books of man! And O, my son, should the gloom and silence of Benè-agâ's cave weigh too heavily on thy young soul, raise thine eyes to some one of the many lines which I have carved upon these rocky walls, in my hours of recreation. They will guide thee back to sweet contentment; give thee strength to persevere unto the end! And now, my son, farewell! Though with thee, near thee, even by thy side, yet remember, I am far

from thee. Ay, farther than earthly staff can measure! Be hopeful, be strong, and thou wilt conquer! Again, farewell!"

"Farewell, great master, farewell!" I exclaimed; and, as my words echoed through the vast, rocky chamber, the last ray of light fled before the thickening gloom, and all was inky blackness.

I had noticed, ere the darkness came, that I was standing near the projecting shelf of rock which was to serve me as a bed, when nature called me to rest.

Turning now softly, I groped my way toward it and stretched myself at full length on its bare surface. For a few moments all went well. Such a conflict of thought was raging in the chambers of my mind, that I took no note of the chill which this couch of stone sent creeping through my limbs. I closed my eyes, thinking to coax sleep to them, and thus forget the ever-increasing pang!

In vain! It seemed as if death itself had seized my feet between his icy palms!

Sharp pains leapt from one joint to another, and wherever my body came into contact with that couch of stone, it seemed as if a thousand needles pricked my flesh. Half-crazed by the ever-increasing agony, I tossed from side to side, like one in delirium. At times I sat up to escape from stupefying dizziness which caught me in its swift, encircling whirl! My heated pulse beat at the thin walls of my temple, until it seemed as if I should go mad! A rushing, soughing, gurgling sound of many waters roared in my ears, while strange, fantastic forms, in lines of fire on inky background, flitted to and fro before my eyes, until I began to fear I should soon be doomed to sit in eternal gloom like Benè-agâ himself.

And now heat and cold held alternate sway within my tired and broken frame. Vainly I strove to wet my parched lips with my tongue! The fever had dried it to a chip. For a few brief moments the torture ceased!

I breathed more freely!

My limbs, thought I, are getting used to their couch of stone! I shall fall asleep and forget my sufferings!

But no! With redoubled fury they came back to their work.

I dared not cry out so soon to Benè-agâ, for mercy, for release from the cruel conditions he had imposed upon me! Rather death than yield so quickly; shrink so like a coward who stands motionless and trembling on the battle field, as a spent ball strikes his breast.

I slept at last!

But O, what a broken, fevered sleep it was! A sleep with unclosed eyes, full of dark and dismal sights. I could stand no more. I yielded and longed for death. In thought, I kissed my parents' hands and felt their soft caresses on my brow and face. And then, it seemed the gracious baroness, my mother, caught my hand in hers and pressed it fervently on her lips. The kiss was so warm, so tender, so life-like, that I started up like one awakening from a long delirium. It cannot be a dream, I murmured, I am awake!

Tossing my racked form over on its side, so that I could touch my right hand—the one on which I had felt the kiss, with my left the mystery was explained.

'T was Bulger!

He was beside my couch of stone. It was he who had licked my cold, numb hand and turned my thoughts homeward. I caressed his head and ears and sought to make him lie down lest the rustle might disturb the blind hermit. He refused to obey, altho' I thrice let him know my wishes. It was his first act of disobedience and for an instant drove all thoughts of pain from my mind. To all my suffering now came this new grief.

Aroused from my stupor at last, by his persistent refusal to obey I collected my thoughts sufficiently to realize that he was bent upon leaping on my couch. His forefeet were already resting upon its edge. I dared not resist lest he should break the solemn stillness of Benè-agâ's cave by giving vent to some sound of entreaty. No sooner had he sprung upon the rocky shelf than I felt him crouching on its edge, and reaching down as if in the act of seizing something in his teeth, something so heavy, too, that it called for violent exertion. Whatever it was, I was not slow in discovering that he was endeavoring to drag it

upon my rocky couch. Half rising, I stretched out my hand to solve the mystery.

O beloved Bulger!

In an outburst of affection I pressed my lips repeatedly upon his body. He took no note of my caresses, but only tugged the harder at the thing he held within his teeth. It was my blanket!

Taught in his early years to fetch my slippers, my gloves, my cap to me, when he found them lying here or there, he had never forgotten to render me these petty services. And thus, noticing that my blanket had, apparently, been forgotten, he seized it, heavy as it was and dragged it to his little master's bed.

Regardless of Benè-agâ's ire; unmindful of the fact that to accept Bulger's gift was plainly an open breach of the compact between the blind hermit and me, I wrapped my bruised and aching body in the thick, warm covering and fell into a long refreshing sleep.

Such was my first night in Benè-aga's cave. The next day was bright and clear and the rocky chamber seemed less dismal to me. My eyes were becoming accustomed to the gloom.

From morn till night, I shunned that bed of torture, passing my time studying out the hidden meaning of the words which Benè-agâ has carved on the rocky walls; watching the birds as they flitted in with food for their nestlings or standing near the blind hermit with my gaze riveted upon his noble features, thick, clustering hair and far-flowing beard!

From this time forth all went well. I soon forgot the long hours of that terrible night of silence and despair. Indeed, I was astounded to find how swiftly the time sped along when one gives himself up to deep and all-absorbing meditation.

Days and nights flitted by like alternate hours of light and darkness.

I was startled from a deep sleep by hearing the full round voice of Benè-agâ saying: "Up! up! little traveler, up! my son, the morn is breaking. The appointed hour has come! To-day we must enter Palin-mâ-Talin or all thy apprenticeship shall have been in vain!"

I sprang up; and, approaching Benè-agâ, related in tones of

unfeigned grief, how I had disregarded the sacred compact between us; and, that, altho' it cut me to the heart, to be obliged to turn back, when I stood upon the very confines of the Great Gloomy Forest, yet I was not worthy to follow him, and was firmly resolved not to plead for mercy!

"All! I told him all! how my frame had been so racked by pain that I was upon the very point of crying out for release from the terrible compact, when my beloved Bulger came to my relief, and saved me from that degradation. He heard me in silence, his noble countenance giving no sign or hint of what was going on within that lofty soul.

At last, a sad and almost imperceptible smile spread over his face and he spake as follows: "Take heart, my son. All is forgiven. Thou art but a child and I should have lightened the burden of this apprenticeship. Nor can I hold thee worthy of blame for yielding to such a touching proof of thy dog's love for thee! Hadst thou repulsed him he would have lain in wakeful sorrow by thy bedside all that night—dear, faithful soul! Would he belonged to me!"

So saying, Benè-agâ bent his towering form and caressed Bulger's head and ears.

Nor was Bulger slow in returning the hermit's caresses. They had become the best of friends. Bulger felt the fascination of Benè-agâ's mysterious power from the very first.

When the hour arrived for us to leave the rocky chamber of gloom and silence, and step out into the sunlight once more, my heart broke out into its old-time beat. Had I not been in the presence of the venerable Benè-agâ, I should have leapt and danced for joy, as we emerged from that dreary abode, and I felt the warm air fan my cheek once more. But, one thing struck me now most forcibly. It was the wonderful change which I noted in the blind hermit himself, when he stood in the sunlight and the morning breezes tossed the curls of his white, silken hair, like April winds making merry with a flock of snow-flakes. First, his appearance was quite different from that to which I had become accustomed. A leathern cap crowned his massive head, and held his thick, rebellious

hair somewhat in control. His wide-flowing beard had entirely disappeared beneath his rude garb, save where it clothed his face and neck. I saw at once that he was clad for work—for toilsome progress through Palin-mâ-Talin's thick growth. In his right hand he carried a curious rod or wand, long, slender, polished and extremely flexible. I soon learned to wonder at his extraordinary skill in using this staff to guide his steps or discover the nature of any object not within the reach of his hands. A rude pouch or leather bag was swung across his shoulder.

The change in Benè-agâ's manner was still more noticeable. To me, this change was as pleasing as it was unexpected. In a brief half hour he became another man. His deep, rich voice, soft and round as the sound of an organ-pipe took on a mellower tone! A faint smile wreathed his noble features, as the sunlight fell upon them. His step became quick and elastic, his movements brisk and agile. So wonderfully keen were his remaining senses that only the closest observer could have guessed that he was blind.

Turning in the direction of the spot where his dogs were at play, he startled me by breaking out into a joyous,—

"Yo ho! my children! Yo ho! my brothers! Here to me! Here to me!"

His dogs—Bulger among them—bounded forward with a loud chorus of barking. Benè-agâ caught the stranger's voice. "It pains me deeply," he cried, "to rob him of his playfellows, for I see him gamboling and sporting with my children!"

As the blind hermit stooped, his dogs, with loud cries of sorrow at parting, sprang up to lick his face and hands.

"Go, my children! Go, my brothers!" said Benè-agâ. "Content yourselves. I'll come again soon, very soon, with love warmed by absence!"

All was now ready for the start. Beneath the rising sun I could see a long, dark line, far away, where earth and sky came together. It was Palin-mâ-Talin. Home of Darkness! The Great Gloomy Forest!

Thither Benè-agâ now directed his footsteps with astonishing

rapidity of gait, tapping the ground with his long, polished wand as he hurried along!

Awe-struck, I followed my blind guide!

In comparison with such miraculous powers of hearing, smelling and feeling, my eyes were worthless. Ever and anon he called out to me:

"Guard thee well, my son, a viper stirred in the grass to thy left! Guard thee well, my son, to touch the leaves of the flowering shrub through which we are passing now—they are poisonous."

"Guard thee well, my son, to taste the waters of the rivulet to which we are coming, until I have made trial of its purity."

"Guard thee well, my son, to pluck one of the flowers which now delight thy eye, and charm thee with their odor. 'Tis next to death to breath their perfume close to thy nostrils."

"Guard thee well, my son, to crush upon thy skin one of the little insects which now fill the air, lest thou spread a subtle poison o'er thy flesh!"

As we drew near to the outer edge of the Great Gloomy Forest, a strange joy lit up Benè-agâ's face. He beat the air with his polished wand in graceful curves and circles, as he poured forth, half singing, half reciting, a sort of chant, invocation, or mysterious greeting to Palin-mâ-Talin, Home of Darkness!

As if charmed by the rich music of his own voice, his spirits ran higher and higher. At times he halted to catch the soft echoes as they came floating back on the wings of the morning air.

As nearly as I can remember Benè-agâ's chant was something like this:

"O, la, la, la, la, l-a-a-a-a! Hail to thee, Palin-mâ-Talin. Shadowy Land! La, la! Lu, la, lo, li! Lu, la, lo, li! We are coming to thee, beloved Temple of Silence and Gloom! Let us into thy dark corridors, Palin-mâ-Talin Lo-il-la! Lo-il-la! Thou art victor! Palin-mâ-Talin, my beautiful! From thy buckler of darkness fall the Sun's arrows, splintered and broken! O, la, la, la, la, la, l-a-a-aa-a-a! We are coming King of Gloom and

Stillness! Palin-mâ-Talin. O silent domain! Let us in from the roar and the glare! Let us in from the roofless world. We are near at hand, Palin-mâ-Talin! Swing open thy black portals! Lift thy veil of Gloom! Admit thy children into thy silent chambers. O, Palin-mâ-Talin, Lo-il-lo! Lo-il-lo! Lo-il-lo! Lo-il-l-a-a-a-a-a-a!"

At last we stood by the very edge of Palin-mâ-Talin.

Benè-agâ swept his polished wand against the foliage of one of the low-hanging, far-reaching branches; then, sprang forward and seizing a handful of the leaves, crushed them in his grasp and raised them to his nostrils. "This is not the gateway, my son" he cried, "we must turn farther northward!"

After about half an hour, he again halted and reaching out for a handful of the leaves inhaled their odor.

"Not yet! not yet!" he murmured "Somewhat northward still! Be not troubled, my son. Thou see'st Palin-mâ-Talin with thine outward eye! Not so Benè-agâ! He must lay his hand upon the very walls of this Temple of Silence and Gloom ere he can see it!"

Suddenly the blind hermit paused. His thin nostrils quivered, his massive breast heaved convulsively. "We are almost there!" he spoke in measured tones. "I catch the perfume of the foliage which clothes the two ebon columns of the gateway." I looked and saw before me two towering trees, whose wide-reaching branches swept the very ground. Side by side they stood, alike in size and grandeur. Benè-agâ passed his hand caressingly over the first branch which brushed his cheek and pressed its leaves to his lips; then, broke out into his wild chant once more.

I stood looking at the blind hermit and listening to his song of greeting, hardly knowing what to expect next when, suddenly, he threw himself upon his knees and crept under the far-reaching branches of one of these gigantic sentinels of the Great Gloomy Forest.

Bulger and I followed him! Thus it was we entered the domain of Palin-mâ-Talin, Home of Darkness. I shall not try to describe to you the solemn stillness, the mysterious twilight

of the Great Gloomy Forest, nor to paint for you the wonderful beauty of the deep green mosses which covered rocks and trees: trailed from the swaying branches, carpeted the floorway, or hung like heavy canopies, from tree to tree, above our heads, and increased the gloom caused by the thick, interlacing foliage.

I had followed Benè-agâ's noiseless footsteps about half a mile into the stilly depths of Palin-mâ-Talin when, I began to feel a strange chill creep over me; beginning at my very finger tips and pursuing its insidious way toward my very vitals. So rapidly did it run its benumbing course that I was upon the point of calling out to the Benè-agâ, when he halted; and having broken a twig from a tree with foliage of dark green and polished leaves, bade me eat them, saying:

"Palin-mâ-Talin does no harm to those that know him!"

I found the leaves pungent and agreeable to the taste. Their effect was magical. My limbs at once forgot their numbness and my step lost its heaviness.

We had now been several hours in the Great Gloomy Forest; and, thus far, Benè-agâ had advanced into its ever-increasing gloom—for night was falling, without a halt.

Had Benè-agâ had as many eyes as Argus and each of lynx's power, he could not have pursued his way thro' Palin-mâ-Talin's gloomy corridors more easily and more securely. His polished wand flashed like a thing of life in his miraculously trained hand, touching everything, vibrating, swinging, advancing, retreating, with a rapidity, that my eyes could not follow.

O, great master!" I called out to him, "let me not be presumptuous enough to speak to thee of things which should be left unstirred in the chambers of thy mind, but if it be permitted to me to know, tell me how thy rayless eyes can pierce this gloom and find a path thro' this trackless forest, wrapt in the gloom and silence of ten thousand years!"

"It shall be as thou wishest, son;" replied the blind hermit "the little there is to know thou shall hear! But surely, thy young limbs must be weary. First let me make ready a bed for the night and spread some food and drink!"

So saying, he swung his leathern bag off his shoulder, took

from it a roll of dried skin and spread it on the ground; then, wrenching four pine boughs from a tree near by, he thrust them in the earth one at each corner of a square, and striking a spark with his tinder-box, set fire to the pitch which trickled down the boughs.

The flickering flames cast a thousand weird shadows on the trailing mosses and black shrouded trees, and filled the air with a grateful warmth.

Benè-agâ now drew forth some dried fruit and berries.

We ate in silence.

Bulger sniffed at the food but nothing more.

Our frugal repast concluded, the blind hermit took from his leathern pouch a sharp-pointed piece of flint with which he pierced the bark of a tree near our bivouac. Into the hole he thrust a slender reed. I was astonished to see a limpid liquid flow from the end of the reed. He filled a gourd with it and placing the drinking vessel in my hand said in a low, caressing voice:

"Drink, my son! 'Twill refresh and strengthen thee!"

I raised the gourd to my lips. The liquid was cool and sweet, and very pleasing to the taste.

"Drink as deep as thou wilt, my son," cried Benè-agâ, "for Palin-mâ-Talin could slake the thirst of an army."

Again I placed the gourd to my lips. This time I drank long and deep. A gentle warmth now coursed thro' my limbs. My eye-lids sank downward, oppressed with a most delicious longing for sleep. Pillowing my head on Benè-agâ's pouch, with my hand resting on my faithful Bulger's head, I was soon wrapped in slumber.

When I awoke, it was still night. The pine knots had burned nearly out. There sat the blind hermit beside me. I could see that he was keeping watch. His head turned as I stirred.

"Thou hast asked me," he began, to tell thee how I am able to find my way thro' Palin-mâ-Talin's gloom. Here, in this track less home of shadow no outward eyes would avail me aught. Thou hast seen how the floor of this vast Temple is everywhere alike. For it, nature has woven a carpet of thick, velvet moss

which, in the flight of centuries, takes on no change of hue. 'Tis ever the same! Tear a pathway in it, in a few short days the rent will be made whole. Blaze the trees, the encircling mosses will, in a brief period hide the marks, and all thy labor will be in vain. Even supposing that thou couldst succeed in leaving a lasting trail behind thee, the deadly poison which lurks in this damp air would chill thy life blood ere thou couldst cross from outer wall to outer wall of this vast Temple, with its roof of interwoven moss and foliage, impenetrable to the noon-day sun.

"Thou hast felt the first touch of that deadly chill, which curdles the warmest blood and sends a sleep of death upon the rash intruder! But to me, O, my son, Palin-mâ-Talin is all light and glow! I cannot see that gloom which strikes such terror to thy soul. And thou must know, my son, that Palin-mâ-Talin has no shadows deep enough to hide the north star from my sight. I always know which way it was the sun went down, and which way it will be that he will rise; for all the winds are known to me, and whence they blow. To thy cheek the air appears to sleep at times. To mine, never! 'Tis no more a task for me to catch the breath-like zephyr—unfelt by thee—than it is for thy faithful dog to take up the trail of his master's footsteps and follow it through the crowded mart. Then again, thou must bear in mind that for a hundred years and more I've been a shadowless figure in this home of shadows; that the trees of Palin-mâ-Talin have taken me to their hearts, and I them to mine; that not only do I know how and where they grow, but it hath been revealed to me that these towering children of Palin-mâ-Talin are not scattered helter-skelter, here and there, in orderless manner; but, that in a certain measure, they are ranged in lines from the rising toward the setting sun, each species forming a belt to itself, not like a grove by man's hand planted, but in a wild, yet orderly confusion. To thee, this would be a useless guide, for thou hast seen how the trunks are swathed up in garbs of moss,and how the gloom gives all the foliage the same deep-dark hue of green. To thine eye, here, all these trees seem alike, the

countless offspring of a single sire! And yet it is not so! For, when in my progress through these lofty corridors of gloom and silence I sway too far northward or southward, a single handful of leaves crushed in my grasp, gives up the secret of my whereabouts. But, even this sure guiding string has failed me at times, and I have gone astray in the home of my friend! And yet in such moments, Palin-mâ-Talin had no terrors for me! When thus, an aimless wanderer in this trackless wood, I learned to draw aside this garb of green which decks Palin-mâ-Talin's breast, and lay my hand upon his very heart!

"So has kind nature sharpened my sense of feeling that by the simple touch of the clay beneath our feet I can set my erring footsteps right and regain my lost path. Be thou, my son, in coming years, as steadfast in thy search for truth as I have been in my endeavors to change this gloom and silence into living light and speech, and thou wilt walk through life's devious paths as easily as I thread my way through the trackless chambers of Palin-mâ-Talin!"

As Benè-agâ ceased speaking, he lifted his song, making the trailing mosses sway with the vigor of his notes, now deep and solemn, now clear and far-reaching.

The echoes came back softened down to flute notes. He listened breathlessly.

"O wonderful man!" thought I, "even the sleeping echoes rouse themselves to guide thy footsteps aright."

"Come, my son!" he cried in tones of gladness, "our torches go to their end. Let us push on! Though the sun be not yet high enough to chase the inky darkness out of Palin-mâ-Talin's depths, still, with this guiding string thou canst follow me!"

Saying this, he placed the end of a leather thong in my hand, and we set out once more.

After we had been an hour or so under way, the sun's rays began so to temper the darkness of the Great Gloomy Forest, that my eyes were of some slight use to me!

Again Benè-agâ broke out in a wild chant, and paused to catch the echo.

"Ah," murmured the blind hermit, half in soliloquy "that was a greeting from the drowsy waters of Lool-pâ-Tool!"

Imagine the feeling of utter helplessness which came over me an hour or so later when, suddenly I found myself standing upon the banks of a broad streamlet, of hue blacker than the wings of night, apparently stagnant; or, at least so sluggish as to seem well deserving of the title "Drowsy Waters."

"This is Lool-pâ-Tool!" said Benè-agâ, as he rested his chin on his hand and seemed to be gazing down on its inky surface.

But how to cross it, for no bark was moored in sight—was now the bewildering thought which oppressed my mind! Surely it cannot be forded, for to the eye it seemed as deep as it was silent and mysterious. Nor yet, would it be otherwise than inviting death itself to plunge into its stagnant waters and swim to the other side.

While I stood thus wrapped in a cloud of anxious thought, Benè-agâ himself seemed scarcely less perplexed. His usual calmness had deserted him.

Drawing some pebbles from his leather pouch, he cast them one by one into the stream, bending forward to catch the sound they made with eager, listening air. Then turning to the right he followed the banks of Lool-pâ-Tool, keeping his staff in the water and beating it gently with the tip as if striving to draw some secret from it.

Again he paused and cast some pebbles into the dark and sluggish stream, and bent forward to get their answer. Again, he woke the echoes, and listened breathlessly to the reply that came, only to take up the march after a brief delay with what seemed to me a somewhat hesitating step. Evidently he was astray. His calm, noble face lost its look of serene confidence. Suddenly halting, he reached out for a handful of foliage, crushed the leaves in a quick and nervous grasp, inhaled their odor, and then resumed his march as before, with head dropped forward on his breast, and doubt and uncertainty visible in every movement.

For an instant the thought flashed thro' my mind that possibly Benè-agâ had gone so far astray as to make the discovery of

the right course impossible. I could feel my lips draw apart, and my heart creep slowly upward into my throat!

The thought of a lingering death from starvation in the chill, dark corridors of Palin-mâ-Talin, set a knife in my heart.

I almost tottered as I followed the blind hermit's lead. My tongue was too dry to let me cry out to him in my sudden despair.

While these terrible thoughts were chasing each other thro' my mind, Benè-agâ halted; and, resting his staff upon the branches of the nearest tree, broke out into one of his wild invocations:

"O Palin-mâ-Talin, Benè-agâ calls unto thee! Hear him! He is astray! Set his feet in the right path! Let him not wander aimlessly about in thy gloom and silence. O, Palin-mâ-Talin! He is thy child; be kind and loving to him!"

With these words Benè-agâ threw himself upon his knees, tore away the thick covering of moss, until he had laid bare the forest floor; from this, he took up a handful of the soil and pressed it between his fingers as if to test some secret quality.

When he arose I knew that all was well. A radiant glow played about his features. He was himself again!

Catching up his wand, he broke away with mad strides, as if pursued by very demons. Only by running could I keep within sight of him.

On! on! we sped along the banks of Lool-pâ-Tool stream of the "Drowsy Watery," mile by mile, Benè-agâ carolling his wild chants of glad thanks, I panting as if bent upon escaping fleshless death himself. Another hundred paces and I would have fallen headlong to the ground.

My feet seemed shod with lead.

Bulger set up a most piteous whining as he saw the look of despair settling on my face.

Suddenly the blind hermit halted; and, turning towards me, cried out in a joyous tone:

"This is the place my son. It is all over now! Fear nothing! Mount on my shoulders! Thou wilt not add a

feather's weight to the burdens which I carry there! Be not troubled about thy dog. Lool-pâ-Tool has no terrors for him." Such was my confidence in the blind hermit's power to bear me safely across the mysterious stream that I did not wait for a second bidding to mount upon his shoulders altho' as far as I could see, the waters of Lool-pâ-Tool looked just as black and deep as ever. Advancing to the edge of the stream Benè-agâ now began, with quick and nervous movement of his staff, to search for hidden stepping stones.

In vain I strained my eyes to catch some sign of resting place for his feet.

And yet, they were there: for with giant strides, steady, sure and rapid, Benè-agâ passed over the "Drowsy Waters of Lool-pâ-Tool and set me safely down on the other bank. I made effort to speak my thanks. But, wonderment had robbed my tongue of power of utterance. I could only gaze in silence upon that noble face—now clad in all its former serenity—then turn and follow its owner's footsteps.

After a few miles further advance Benè-agâ halted, and, bending his gaze upon me, as if his eyes were as full of light as his look was of radiance, spoke as follows:

"My son, my task is done! Look, dost thou not see that gleam of light yonder? 'Tis the outer wall of Palin-mâ-Talin Pass it and thou wilt enter the world of noise and glare once more! Thou hast no further need of me. Go straight on; and, in a brief half hour, the sun's rays will greet thee again! Once outside of this pathless wood, thou wilt find thyself upon a lofty parapet—a sheer height of two hundred feet above the plains below. Look about thee and thou wilt see a stairway of solid rock, leading downward to the plain—not such as built by hands of man, with steps of even height, hewn regular and smooth, but a rude, fantastic flight of stairs left standing there by nature when she cleared away the mass each side. Upon these narrow steps, smoothed by the beating storms of ten thousand years, the waters daily pour a treacherous slime, so that those who have rashly tried to pass to the fair land below, now lie among the jagged rocks. No foot is sure enough to

tread on the slippery steps of Bōga-Drappa. To fall means certain death. I cannot counsel thee my son. Be wary! Be wise! Farewell."

As this last word fell from Benè-agâ's lips he flashed out of my sight like a spirit form.

The Palin-mâ-Talin covered him with her darkness.

He was gone.

The tears gathered in my eyes.

Fain would I have pressed its hand to my lips.

I knew it was useless for me to try and call him back or to follow him. So, with a heavy heart I turned and pressed forward in the direction he had indicated.

I was soon at the outer edge of Palin-mâ-Talin and to tell the truth I felt my heavy heart grow light again. Bulger too, showed his delight at being once more in the warm sunshine. Breaking out into the wildest barking he raced hither and thither with the joyous air of a boy set free from long and irksome task.

As Bene-agâ had described to me, I now found myself standing upon a lofty parapet, overlooking a delightful valley, thro' which I longed to wander, after my long stay in Benè-agâ's cave and the gloomy trail through Palin-mâ-Talin's depths.

Walking along the edge of the cliff I was not long in coming upon the Stair of the Evil Spirit or Bōga-Drappa as it was called.

It was jagged, irregular and tilted here and there; and yet, quite even and stair-like when one considered that it was of nature's building. As the blind hermit had warned me the treacherous slime covered Bōga-Drappa's entire length, forever renewed by the impure waters which trickled down its steps.

To attempt to descend would have been worse than madness.

No human foot was sure enough to tread those slippery stones and reach the bottom.

Although I was impelled by the strongest desire to hasten forward I saw that a single rash act might end my life.

Ordinary obstacles have no terror for me. But when nature sets a threatening barrier in my way I halt, but do not surrender.

And, therefore, I sat calmly down to ponder over the problem that faced me.

For three days I tarried on this parapet and each day I visited Bōga-Drappa and gazed long and fixedly upon its far-reaching flight of rocky steps.

On the third day I had solved the problem.

Hastily gathering up every fragment of lime-stone lying near, I piled it in a cone-shaped heap and around it and over it I laid a mass of dry leaves and billets and over all such logs as I could lift. Then, striking fire with my flint and tinder I set the pile in flames.

In the morning I was rejoiced to find a heap of the purest quick-lime beneath the ashes.

By means of an empty skull of some animal of the deer family, which I found lying near, I at once began to feed the waters trickling over Bōga-Drappa's steps with the lime.

All that day and up to the noon hour of the next, I kept the water which flowed down the stairway, milk white with the lime.

Now, however, came the greatest difficulty. From the size of the stream I realized that it would be impossible for me to stay its course by means of any dam that I could build, for a longer time than one brief half hour. But, I dared not wait too long, for the coating of lime, which, by this time I knew must have been deposited on the rocky steps, to harden in the sun. The dam might break and undo all my work.

At high noon, when the sun was beating down the hottest, I put the last touch to my dam. I was startled to see with what rapidity the waters gathered in the basin I had built. With anxious eyes and throbbing heart, I stood at the head of Bōga-Drappa's stair of rock and gazed up and down.

I could see no signs of drying on the black and glistening steps. One moment after another glided by. At last a faint trace of whiteness began to show itself here and there. I turned an anxious glance at the gathering waters. The frail dam seemed about to yield to the ever-increasing pressure.

In one or two places, I caught glimpses of tiny rivulets trickling through.

Once more, with a terrible feeling of faintness I glanced down the long dark flight of steps. Half blinded by the noon day sun I nevertheless caught sight of a snow white crust on the stairway.

Now was my time or never!

Calling out to Bulger to precede me I sprang boldly down the stair which, till that moment had been black with treacherous slime. The waters broke away and came rushing on my very heels. Down, down, I went in headlong haste, bounding like a deer from step to step!

My heart sank within me as I felt the torrent, now mad and raging spatter its spray on my neck.

Another instant and I'm saved! My feet strike firm.

I see the fair country come nearer and nearer.

Another leap, and with my faithful Bulger I've cleared the dreaded stairway of Bōga-Drappa! Staggering forward, I reach the greensward of the valley and fall fainting, after my terrible race for life!

Bulger's mingled wailing and caresses roused me after a few moments of clouded brain and then all was well. And yet a shudder stole over me as I raised my eyes to take a last look at the rocky stairway of Bōga-Drappa, now clad once more in its black, glistening, treacherous slime.

Refreshed by a hearty meal upon the luscious fruit which grew in wonderful profusion on every side, followed by a deep draught of cool, clear spring water, and calling joyfully to my faithful Bulger to follow me, I set out for the distant summit of the ridge which shut in this peaceful little corner of the earth's surface, so well fitted for the home of human beings, and yet so utterly abandoned and tenantless, even by four footed creatures. While, I am a great admirer of nature in all her aspects from wildest grandeur to picture-like delicacy, yet no spot which is not inhabited by man or beast, can long hold me content.

I must have life, not the dull spiritless life of tree, shrub or plant, ever-chained to one spot, but the restive, bounding, throbbing life of man or animal to study, contemplate and

reflect upon. Therefore, it was that I determined to pass at once out of this beautiful little valley.

I pushed on with eager step for I was desirous of gaining the high land before nightfall. In this I was successful, but the twilight had so deepened when I reached the crest of the ridge, that any survey of the country lying beyond was impossible.

Shortly after I had lighted a bivouac fire, Bulger came in with a bird—of the quail kind—and I proceeded to broil it on the live embers.

The faithful animal was delighted to be once more in a country in which he could serve me and while our supper was cooking, took occasion to go through a number of his old tricks, in order to see his little master's face brighten up.

Side by side, we lay down for the night in that faraway land, and were soon fast asleep.

The morning broke with rare splendor. I hastened to examine the country beneath me. It was dotted here and there by groves and bits of woodland and seemed unusually green and fruitful.

What attracted my attention more than anything else was the fact that, as far as my eye could reach, the region was watered by a perfect network of little rivers, which glistened in the morning sun like bands of burnished silver.

I had never seen the like. It occured to me at once, that should these streams prove too deep and rapid to ford, it would force me to change my course entirely, and pass either to the north or south, until I reached a clear country. It was pretty well toward sundown when I stood upon the confines of this strange land which I named Polypotamo or "Many Rivers." The streams, which varied from ten to twenty feet in width, were deep, clear and swift.

As you may readily imagine such a country was very productive. Fruit and flower-bearing shrubs and trees, all of a most beautiful green grew in the wildest abundance. The air, cooled and purified as it was by the numerous streams of limpid water, was like a magic inhalation, carrying a strange feeling of dreamy delight to every part of the body.

Said I to myself:

"If this fair land be not inhabited then it is a monstrous pity, for here kind nature has spread her riches with a more than usually lavish hand.

Bulger and I stretched ourselves upon the bank of the first stream that we reached and were preparing for a nap after our long days tramp, when suddenly the strangest noises reached our ears. He started up with a look of mingled alarm and curiosity which, could I have seen my own face, I would undoubtedly have found pictured there in equally strong lines.

Louder and louder grew these curious sounds.

I listened with pricked-up ears, as I strained my eyes in the direction whence they came, eager to catch the first glimpse of the beings who uttered them.

I had not long to wait. About an eighth of a mile away, my eyes fell upon a sight, which, in spite of the possible dangers threatening my life, in case these creatures had proven to be vicious or savage, caused me to burst out into a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

There, in full view, was a troop of human creatures, dwarfish in stature—not being much over four feet in heigth —who seemed incapable of using their legs as we do; but moved about from one place to another by hopping, as some birds do, or as rabbits would do if they moved about standing upright on their hind legs.

In an instant they caught the sound of my voice; and, with the swiftness of the wind, and with an ease that astounded me, leaped over the two intervening streams—each of which was at least fifteen feet in width—and came bounding toward us with the same gigantic leaps! The whole thing was done so quickly, and the mode of locomotion was so novel and altogether wonderful, that I was surrounded before I knew what happened to me.

It is needless to say that I couldn't understand their language, although I soon mastered it, consisting as it did of pure Aryan roots, no word being of more than three letters.

The Man-Hoppers—such was my translation of their name,

Umi-Lobas—ranged themselves in a circle around Bulger and me, threw themselves on their faces, so to speak—for their arms were ridiculously out of all proportion to their bodies—and threatened with shrill outcries and menacing movements, to kick Bulger and me to death instantly unless we surrendered unconditionally.

It was a novel sight.

THE JOLLY PARTY OF UMI LOBAS (MAN HOPPERS) THAT CAPTURED BULGER AND ME.

Bulger was inclined to advise resistance; but, when I had given a hurried glance at their feet, which were very large and attached to astonishingly vigorous legs, I deemed it only prudent to run up the white flag; in fact, I gave them to understand that we threw ourselves on their mercy.

But first, a word about these strange people:

They were, as I have said, small of stature, and let me add that, upon their narrow, sloping shoulders were set delicate, doll-like heads, animated by large, lustrous, black eyes of extreme softness in expression. Their arms looked like the arms of a boy on the body of a man. But, although so small, for they reached only to their waists and ended in tiny, shapely hands, yet they showed themselves possessed of extraordinary strength and dexterity. Their legs, however, were the most wonderful part of them.

In fact, I might almost say that the Umi-Lobas were all legs, so out of all proportion was the development of their limbs. The effect of this disproportion may be easily imagined. It so dwarfed their bodies that they appeared like cones set upon two legs.

"Miscreant!" cried the leader, as I learned three days later when I had mastered their language, "if thou dost not instantly admit that his majesty, Gâ-roo, King of the Umi-Lobas, is not the fastest, farthest and most graceful jumper in the world, thou shalt be kicked to death without the least ceremony!"

I made signs that I was quite willing to admit this, although I didn't understand exactly what it was!

Seeing that I was not disposed to attempt any harm, the Man-Hoppers sprang to their feet and seated themselves in a perfect ring around Bulger and me, like so many rabbits when standing on their hind feet to reach something, intent upon getting a good look at us, or at me rather, for Bulger was evidently no great novelty for them.

They kept up a perfect rattle of remarks in shrill piping tones upon my personal appearance. I, too, was by no means idle.

I kept even pace with their galloping curiosity, studying the expression of their faces and the movements of their bodies. After a few moments I was given to understand that I must start at once for the palace of their gracious monarch, Gâ-roo, the One Thousandth, for they were a very ancient people.

As I rose to my feet and took a few steps toward the water, intending to assure them that I could not leap across the stream, it became their turn to laugh.

And laugh they did too, with such spirit, such heartiness—I might almost say such violence—that I never realized till then that they laugh best who laugh last.

Again and again their piping, pygmy voices broke out in shrill chorus while their pretty doll faces were convulsed with merriment.

Bulger repeatedly showed his teeth, and gave vent to short, spiteful barks as the Umi-Lobas continued their, to him, unseemly behavior. But I knew it would only injure us in the end, if I showed any signs of anger, so I simply shrugged my shoulders and waited for them to recover from their fit of merriment. Finally, between the pauses of laughter I caught such words as:

"Pendulum-legs!"

"Man-scissors!"

"Man Tongs!"

"Flip-flop! Wiggle-waggle!"

"Here she goes, there she goes!"

Such were a few of the terms expressive of the impression which my poor unoffending legs made upon the minds of the Umi-Lobas.

They quieted down at last and again began to make signs that I should prepare to follow them.

When at last I succeeded in making them understand that I was not a jumper, and could no more leap across the stream in front of us than I could hop over the moon, their mirth now gave place to disgust. Such pleasant phrases as:—

"Lead legs!"

"Two-legged snail!"

"Little man stuck-in-the-ground!"

"Little man tied-to-his-head!" etc., etc., were fired at me.

After a consultation, it was determined to dispatch two of their number for a sort of porte-chaise in use among the Umi-Lobas in which to transport Bulger and me to the King's palace.

Away went the messengers like the wind, in leaps of twenty feet seeming scarcely to touch the ground, bounding along in the distance like pith balls. After a short delay they reap-

peared bearing, slung on a sort of yoke resting upon their shoulders, a stout wicker basket.

Bulger and I were invited to step into it; the cover was closed and securely fastened by a stout leathern thong. Then with a bumpety bump sort of motion away we went across land and water.

Bulger whined piteously and fixed his lustrous eyes upon me, as if to say:

"Little master, if they are transporting us to torture or death I'm glad I am with thee!"

I soon gave him to understand that there was no danger.

He returned my caresses and we both awaited further developments. It seems that the two Man-Hoppers who had been sent for the porte-chaise had spread the news of their strange capture, so the whole town was on the watch for our arrival.

At last we came to a full stop. The basket was set down on the ground and the leathern thong loosened. To tell the truth, I was as anxious to see as they were.

A terrible hubbub was in progress, those in authority having seemingly lost all control over the pushing, pulling, scrambling mass of Umi-Lobas. With such violent outcries and still more violent gestures did they gather about us, that I began to fear that they would overturn our carriage and do Bulger and me some real injury, in their mad curiosity.

Suddenly a voice, louder and shriller than all the rest, called out:

"Silence! His majesty, Gâ-roo, the Thousandth, King of the Umi-Lobas, is approaching. Down! Down! Silence! Fall back!"

One of the attendants now raised the lid of our basket and courteously invited me to step out.

Without stopping to give the thing a thought, I seized the leathern thong, sprang lightly up and threw one of my legs over the side of the basket.

Instantly there was an outburst of shrill, ear-piercing exclamations of wonder, fear, surprise, horror, delight and I don't know how many other emotions.

For a moment I was startled, and half inclined to make my way back into my basket again. Suddenly, however, it occurred to me what it all meant.

The Umi-Lobas being able to move their legs only backward and forward, and utterly incapable of moving one leg without the other, were about as much astonished at seeing one of my legs come flopping over the side of the basket, as I would be if you should throw one of your legs out sidewise and strike your foot against your shoulder.

As I sprang lightly to the ground and took a few steps towards King Gâ-roo, who stood surrounded by his court officials, a very lean Umi-Loba on one side of him and a very fat one on the other—a perfect whirlwind of such cries as: "Pendulum-legs" "Walking-Scissors!" "Measuring-Man!" "Little Man All Head!" etc., etc., burst forth.

King Gâ-roo received me very pleasantly; requesting me to walk, run, hop on one foot, cross my legs, he, standing with wide opened eyes as I went through my paces to please him.

He then asked me my name, my rank at home, my profession, my age, what I liked to eat and drink, how much heavier my head was than my body, etc., etc. I made such a good impression on the King of the Umi-Lobas that he turned and invited me to spend some time at his palace.

I was delighted, for I was very desirous of studying the manners and customs of these strange people, and of conversing with their learned men. Suddenly, there was a great change manifest in the King's manner toward me. He listened with knitted brows and compressed lips, first to his fat counsellor and then to his lean one.

His lean minister, so lean that he appeared to me to be an animated steel spring snapping apart, was named, Megâ-Zaltô or "Great Jumper," than the King himself no one being able to leap across a broader stream.

His fat minister, so fat that he was able to advance only by little hops of a few inches at a time, was named Migrô-Zaltô, or "Small Jumper," and as he had for many years been unable to race about the country like the other Umi-Lobas and had con-

sequently had much time on his hands, which he had used to improve his mind reading and studying, until he had acquired great wisdom. Hence King Gâ-roo's choice of him as royal minister and court adviser.

I was again ordered to stand in front of his majesty, the ruler of all the Umi-Lobas.

"Sir Pendulum-legs!" said he, "upon reflection, I am persuaded that thy visit to my dominions bodes no good. Thou must know that I have two privy councillors, to whose advice I always listen and then do as I see fit. His excellency Megâ-Zaltô," continued King Gâ-roo, pointing to his lean minister, "counsels me to command that thou be stamped and kicked to death at once, saying that thou wilt work great injury among my people; thou being a foreigner from a faraway land, they will endeavor to imitate thy manner of walking. Our good old-fashioned ways of walking will be sneered at; and my people's legs will soon lose their wonderful strength and activity.

"My other councillor, who is a very learned man and loves to discuss questions of race, manners and customs with strangers, advises me to let thee live for several weeks, at least, until he has had an opportunity to get some valuable information from thee. Now, I am a quiet and peace-loving King, for nature by surrounding my dominions with such a network of rivers, and giving us the power to leap over them, makes it next to impossible for an enemy to follow us. Therefore, Little Man All Head, it is my royal will that for the present no harm come to thee!"

"Thanks, most powerful and graceful jumper in this or any other world!" said I, with a very low bow. "I accept my life at thy hands in order to use it to make known thy goodness and greatness in every land I shall pass through."

My delicate flattery touched King Gâ-roo very perceptibly. He smiled and nodded his little doll head in the friendliest manner. But Megâ-Zaltô's fierce, little face was screwed up in a thousand wrinkles. I felt within me that he was firmly resolved to do me injury.

Now, there was another interruption. A shrill, piping baby-voice suddenly rang out in a series of angry screams, while a score of other voices in soft, soothing tones could be heard as if endeavoring to comfort the screamer.

I turned my eyes in the direction of the voices. To my surprise and delight I saw coming towards me one of the female Umi-Lobas, advancing timidly with light and graceful hops, like a sparrow on the greensward. Her head and face looked for all the world like some of the wax dolls I had seen in Paris, only she was a trifle paler than they.

It was the beautiful princess, Hoppâ-Hoppâ. She seemed to be in a very fretful and petulant humor, and showed her peevishness in every movement.

Nothing pleased her. She pouted, hung her head, and threw her baby-arms about, upon the most trivial provocation.

As I learned afterwards, this all proceeded from her unwillingness to marry the lean, bony Megâ-Zaltô, who was violently in love with her, and to whom the King, in a moment of some great contentment, had rashly promised the princess in marriage, and as King Gâ-roo had in doing so taken the Umi-Lobas' vow: "May I never be able to jump farther than the length of my nose, if I break my vow," he dared not break his word, and, of course, the old, thin, bony, wrinkled Megâ-Zaltô insisted upon his sticking to the bargain.

The effect of all this was to throw the beautiful princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ into a deep melancholy. In fact, she refused absolutely to partake of any food for so long a while that everybody said sadly, "She will die!"

King Gâ-roo was beside himself with grief. But, as Megâ-Zaltô had no blood, he couldn't feel any pity for either father or daughter, and insisted that the King should stick to his bargain with him.

Led on at last by the rich reward offered by King Gâ-roo to any physician who could succeed in making princess Hoppâ-Happâ partake of food, one of the court physicians hit upon the following plan:

The attendants were directed to set a table in the princess'

apartment, and load it down with her favorite dishes. Then the lady-in-waiting was instructed to bind a silk band around the princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ's body, when the latter retired for the night, so arranged that it should press gently, but continously on the sympathetic nerve, and cause her to walk in her sleep.

The plan worked successfully. Every night about midnight princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ would rise from her bed, while in the deepest sleep, sit down at the table and partake of a hearty meal. After which she returned to bed, when one of the ladies of the bed-chamber immediately loosened the silken band, lest she might arise the second time and overeat herself.

Princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ advanced towards me, hopping along with a timid air, until she was close enough to get a good look at me.

I was then desired to go through my paces once more, which I did with a great deal of vigor, concluding the performance by sitting down and crossing my legs.

Hoppâ-Hoppâ smiled faintly at first; but, when it came to the leg-crossing feat, she clapped her little doll hands and broke out in a laugh about as loud as the low notes of a flute.

King Gâ-roo was crazed with joy. It was the first time Hoppâ-Hoppâ had laughed for a year. I could see that there was a hurried consultation going on between King Gâ-roo and his fat and lean ministers. I knew only too well what it all meant. But princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ interrupted the consultation, and solved the whole question herself by crying out like a spoilt child clamoring for a toy, "I want him!"

King Gâ-roo burst forth into a loud laugh, in which everyone joined, save the lean, rattle-jointed Megâ-Zaltô, who scowled fiercely at me, screwing his little face up like a dried apple.

"He is thine; take him, beloved daughter," exclaimed King Gâ-roo gayly, "and if he can cure thy melancholy and make thee once more the joy and sunshine of our Court, no one of the glorious gems which deck our royal diadem shall be too good for him."

Amid great rejoicing and loud huzzas, a silk cord was tied about my body and I was led away by the beautiful princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ. Bulger resented the indignity of tying a cord around my waist and came within an ace of setting his teeth in the thick leg of the attendant who performed that service for me. Growling and showing his teeth right and left, the poor, puzzled animal followed me to prison; I say to prison, for that was what it proved to be.

Night and day, a guard surrounded my apartments and kept within respectful distance when I was summoned to divert the gentle princess by running, hopping on one foot, walking with my toes turned out or in, or with my feet stretched far apart.

But the one thing which delighted the princess and chased the melancholy from the pretty doll face was my ability to cross my legs. This wonderful feat I was obliged to repeat and repeat until my limbs fairly ached; but no matter how often repeated to the gentle Hoppâ-Hoppâ it was ever new and wonderful, and she invariably rewarded me by smiling and clapping her baby-hands.

About this time it was that my beloved brother Bulger gave me another proof of his deep affection and most extraordinary intelligence. I had no sooner begun to prepare for bed than I noticed that something was the matter with him. He fixed his lustrous black eyes pleadingly upon me, bit my shoe playfully, tugged at my clothing, sprang upon me, then bounded off toward the bed, sniffed at it, growled in unfeigned anger, and then making his way back to me, began to tease and worry me once more. I was half inclined to get provoked. By turns I scolded and petted him. All to no purpose; he continued his strange actions, growing, if anything, more and more violent in his manner. At last I was ready for bed. Striving with all my power to quiet and console him, I made an effort to throw myself on my bed, so that he might leap up and lie down beside me.

But no, it was impossible. With grip of iron he laid hold of my night-robe and held me firmly fast, whining and crying most piteously, as if to say,

"O, loved little master, why is it that thou canst not understand me?"

Suddenly a strange thought flashed across my mind. I stooped and glanced under my couch.

Nothing seemed amiss.

Then, as if urged on by some unseen hand, I seized the bed-clothing and hurled it on the floor. Lo, the mystery was solved! There, hidden beneath the drapery, shone the tips of a dozen or more tiny blades, each sharper than a needle's point, and as I found upon examination, stained with a poison so subtle that the slightest prick would have robbed me of life. Need that I tell you how the tears burst forth, how I flung myself upon my knees and caught that beloved animal in my arms, covering him with kisses?

He was satisfied.

Again, had he added to that long list of debts due him from me —debts only to be discharged in coin fresh and bright from the heart's mint. As you have doubtless guessed, this cowardly and cruel attempt on my life was the work of that living coil of steel springs, Megâ-Zaltô, who had determined to put out of the way the hated foreigner, whose monstrous deformities were so pleasing to the being he loved.

King Gâ-roo was greatly incensed when, upon Bulger's recognition of the would-be murderer in the presence of the whole Court, the miserable wretch made a clean breast of it, and related how he had arranged the knives with his own hands.

"Out of my sight, thou unworthy servant! If I do not command that thy vile heart and viler head be parted by the executioner's axe, it is because thy father rendered mine priceless services. Go! Come not again until I summon thee!"

King Gâ-roo now took me into special favor.

In the first place, he was delighted to see how successful my efforts had been to amuse the princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ, on whose baby cheeks the roses glowed once more, and whose child-voice rang out again as of old, like a flute note or a tiny silver bell.

His majesty ordered that the Court painter should forthwith

make a portrait of Bulger for the royal gallery, and that a plaster cast of my head should be taken for the royal museum,

I was much pleased with all this attention.

But I noticed that the very moment I hinted at the necessity of my speedy return home, King Gâ-roo skillfully turned the conversation to some other subject. The fact of the matter was, he feared to have me leave the palace lest his beloved Hoppâ-Hoppâ should miss my daily performances and fall back again into her melancholy.

The little princess herself was not slow in exerting her power over me. Snapping the ground with her feet, like a rabbit, when I failed to be quite as entertaining as usual, and even going so far as to threaten me with a dose of that living coil of steel-spring, called Megâ-Zaltô, when I refused to cross my legs and uncross them quickly enough to please her ladyship.

One day, being in a sort of brown study, over my position, and revolving in my mind several different ways of making my escape from King Gâ-roo's dominions, I unwittingly paid little attention to Hoppâ-Hoppâ's commands. In vain she stormed, snapping the ground with her little feet, shaking her baby hands at me, piping out in shrill and angry tones at my negligence.

I didn't quicken my pace one jot. A heavy load of thoughts oppressed my mind.

My heart was full of sorrow.

All that day I had been thinking of home, of the dear old baron and the gentle baroness, my mother, and wondering whether they missed me at the castle.

Suddenly came a messenger from King Gâ-roo summoning me at once to go to the audience chamber.

With a bound I came to myself.

The little princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ had gone to her apartments.

I started to call her back.

Every instant I expected to hear that little bundle of bones and malevolence jump out at me like a venomous toad.

With fear and trembling I betook me to the King's chamber.

To my unspeakable delight his majesty, the ruler of the Umi-Lobas, was in the rosiest of humors.

He met me with outstretched hands, poured out a beaker of wine for me, and bade me sit down at the very foot of the throne.

I strove in vain to stammer out my thanks.

He would not hear a word of them; said that "the stream should flow the other way," meaning that I was the one to be thanked.

"Now, little man all head," began the King, after I had finished my wine, "I have sent for thee to try and make thee happy, in the same measure as thou hast contributed to my happiness. This day I speak to thee from a father's heart. Thou hast restored my darling child to health and contentment, and remembering from my conversations with thee that thou art a great lover of rare and useful books, I have had copies made of every book on the shelves of the royal library, and I now beg thee to accept them as a very slight token of my gratitude."

I was speechless.

The blood rushed fast and hot to my cheeks.

I stammered out a few senseless words of protest, thanks, surprise, and what not.

The plan seemed to me only too plainly a scheme to tie me in King Gâ-roo's service, to load me with several thousand volumes which I would have no possible means of carrying with me, and which, to leave behind would be such an insult that arrest and imprisonment would most surely follow.

At last I succeeded in getting myself together in some shape, and spake as follows:

"O, most powerful, wonderful and graceful jumper of all the Umi-Lobas, Gâ-roo, thousandth of thy line, I implore thee do not load me down with such a vast and priceless treasure. Thou knowest I am but a sojourner for a brief term in thy kingdom; I have no caravan, when I go hence to transport this vast accumulation of wisdom, stored in so many thousands of thick and bulky volumes, steel-clasped and iron-hinged. Thy gift is far too princely for so humble a visitor as I. Therefore, most gracious King Gâ-roo, bestow it upon some wealthy noble

of thy land, in whose spacious castle halls these books may find a safe resting-place, shelf rising on shelf, a very fortress of learning, impregnable to the cohorts of ignorance."

King Gâ-roo smiled.

Then, turning to an attendant, he said:

"Summon Poly-dotto to attend before me, and bid him bring the library with him."

I was more puzzled than ever by this command.

In a few moments the door swung open, and an aged Umi-Loba, well bent with years, with long tufts of white hair growing from his ears—for these people do not permit hair to grow upon their faces, plucking it out and destroying its roots in early life—and carrying a single volume of goodly size under his arm.

He advanced with feeble hops, steadying himself upon a staff.

His voice brought a smile to my face in spite of myself, for it whistled like a flute, unskilfully stopped, and ever and anon broke out into a funny squeak.

But although infirm of body, Poly-dotto was a perfect wonder of mind and memory.

I was fairly startled to find that Poly-dotto could understand my language with perfect ease, not a thing to startle one, either, when we stop to think that all our European tongues originated in this part of the world.

Poly-dotto hopped forward, made an attempt to bend his body more than it was, thrust the long, white tufts of hair growing from his ears into the bosom of his garb, and placed the book he had brought with him into King Gâ-roo's hands.

His majesty returned the salutation of the aged sage, and then, bending a look upon me, beckoned to me to draw near.

I obeyed.

"Receive, Sir Pendulum-legs," cried King Gâ-roo, "as a mark of my affection and a proof of my gratitude, this complete and perfect transcript of the entire royal library, for many centuries the pride of the Kings of the Umi-Lobas."

I glanced at King Gâ-roo, then at the back of the book thinking that it was merely the catalogue of the books contained in the royal library.

But, no; there was the title, "Complete Transcript," etc.

I opened the book.

Its pages were thinner than the finest tissue I had ever seen.

I turned to the last page.

Twenty thousand pages!

My astonishment was redoubled.

With some difficulty, on account of my unskilled fingers, I turned over some pages here and there. They were all closely filled with minute dots and strokes.

To my eye, one page seemed like another, a bewildering repetition of these same little dots and strokes.

I looked up at King Gâ-roo and Poly-dotto. They were both much amused over my confusion.

Like a flash the truth burst upon me. It seemed to me like waking from a dream.

Yes, there was no doubt of it. I was that moment in the land of the original short-hand writers. Here had arisen that mysterious system of recording language by means of dots and strokes, of which so many men, in so many different countries, in different centuries, had claimed to be the inventors.

In my readings of ancient peoples I had often seen it darkly hinted at, that far, far back in remote ages there existed a race of beings, with short arms and tiny hands, who had invented a written language to suit their wants, in which absolutely no letters at all were used, the words being represented by dots and strokes placed at different heights to denote different sounds.

With a sort of breathless delight I now sat down and began to examine the book anew, pausing every now and then to repeat a few words of thanks to the King of the Umi-Lobas.

"Inform little man all head, most learned Poly-dotto," cried the King, "how many volumes he holds in his hand."

Poly-dotto caressed the white tufts hanging from his ears, and spake as follows:

"The royal library which thou holdest in thy hand, contains eight thousand volumes all rare and valuable, and only to be found in the library of our royal master. These volumes treat

of astrology, alchemy, divination, cheirosophy, medicine, mathematics, law, politics, philosophy, pastimes, warfare, fifty volumes of poetry, fifty of history, fifty of wonder-stories, besides several hundred treatises on theosophy, altruism, positivism, hypnotism, mind-reading, transmigration of souls, art of flying, embalming etc., etc.!"

"O, wonderful! Most wonderful!" was my ejaculation.

"But I beseech thee, O, learned Poly-dotto," I continued, "impart to me the secret of all this! Unfold to me the origin of this most wonderful system of writing whereby the wisdom of ages may be recorded in one small volume!

Poly-dotto glanced at the king, who bowed his head in sign of his royal consent that the aged sage might speak.

"Where we now stand," began Poly-dotto, tossing back the long tufts of white hair which reached from his ears to his shoulders," was once a rugged and mountainous country. In those days, now some thirty thousand years ago, our people were more like thine than at present. To climb the rocky sides of these mountains required long, sinewy arms and strong hands of great grasping power, and flexible legs, moving quite independently of each other, like mountaineers in all lands. But, all of a sudden, these rock-crested heights began to sink and the valleys to rise; true, very slowly and gradually, but yet uninterruptedly, so that in a few years, what had been a rough, broken country, ridged and wrinkled, began to take on the aspect of a perfectly level land. With these changes our people began to change.

Having no longer any use for hands of iron grip and arms of tireless muscles, they were not long in finding out that this strength was leaving them, that their great breadth of shoulder and depth of chest were slowly but surely disappearing in their sons and grandsons. By a strange fatality, about this time, a terrible flood passed over our luckless land. Our panic-stricken people had just time enough to escape. For several months the regions once inhabited by a contented little nation were covered by water many fathoms deep. When, at last, the waters had subsided, and our ancestors were permitted to set foot again

on their native soil, what a change met their eyes! This vast domain of our gracious master, King Gâ-roo—the Thousandth, had become as you now see it, a perfectly level plain, net-worked by the countless narrow but deep and swift-rolling streams. But the soil brought in the arms, so to speak, of these raging waters and cast upon our houses, burying them far beneath, was of most extraordinary fertility, just as you see it now. Every manner of plant, fruit, flower, vegetable and grain grows here without cultivation when once planted. Our people were not slow to take advantage of Nature's kindness and build up once more the happy homes destroyed by the flood. But now we were brought face to face with a most wonderful state of things. Here we were shut in, surrounded by a vast net-work of streams, and yet taught by our terrible experience so to dread water, that not even to escape from death itself could our people be induced to swim across one of these little rivers or pass over it in any sort of boat. Time went on. It was either a question of living on these long narrow necks of land, and walking scores of miles to pass around the bends and curves of the streams, or else jump over them. Our wise men issued instructions to our forefathers, telling them how from early childhood they must train their little ones to leap, encouraging them by rewards to keep up the practice until leaping became as easy to them as walking and running had been. The royal ancestors of our most gracious master enacted most stringent laws against walking and running. In a few generations great changes took place. It was not an unusual thing to see a child of eight or ten leap six or eight feet over rivulets while playing some game like your hide and seek. As these child-hoppers increased in years, their power of leaping soon led them to see that they could advance much more rapidly by jumping than by the ancient, toilsome way of setting first one and then the other foot forward.

The streams now widened, putting the leaping powers of our people to severe tests. But we overcame every obstacle, and in a few generations it became a rare thing indeed to see a Umi-Loba moving about in the ancient manner. As you may easily imagine, Nature could not furnish vigor enough to enable

our people to transform themselves in this manner, and at the same time preserve their length, strength and power of shoulders, arms and hands. A most astonishing result showed itself. What was gained below was lost above. Our people's arms began to grow flabby; their hands took on a delicate and nerveless appearance, as if a long illness had bleached and softened them. Then the wise men of our nation noticed another change. After a certain age, the arms of our children ceased growing entirely, and although our physicians made extraordinary efforts to overcome this sudden stoppage of growth, which usually occurred when our children reached their tenth year, yet all their exertions were of no avail.

Our king, to his great dismay, saw growing up about him a race of young men whose arms were so short, and whose hands were so small and delicate, that they could no longer wield the spears and bows and arrows of our forefathers. Even the knives and forks and drinking cups had to be made smaller and smaller as these wonderful changes came about.

And not long, too, was it before our wise men found it utterly impossible to hold and guide the long, heavy pens of their ancestors, or to lift the pondrous volumes in which our fathers had kept the records of our nation.

With smaller pens came smaller books, and finer writing, until at last one of my ancestors, in a moment of happy inspiration, conceived the idea of giving up the ancient way of writing by means of two score or more of letters, so large that only a few of them could be written upon one line, and of which two or three were necessary in order to record one simple sound, and of using little dots and strokes as fine as hairs, to represent the sound of our words.

Our children were delighted.

Their short arms and tiny hands were well fitted for such work.

In a few years the new system of writing was taught in all our schools, and by royal edict became the only lawful method of writing throughout the kingdom. Later, another of my ancestors greatly improved the system, so simplifying

it that whole sentences could be recorded by a single tiny dot or hair-stroke.

By means of this wonderful system is it that we are enabled to compress a whole library into one single book, as you have seen, and to make it possible for our royal master to carry about with him on his journeys the assorted wisdom of ages, in so compact a form that it may be placed under the royal pillow and yet not wrinkle it.

"Thou knowest full well," continued Poly-dotto, with a smile, as he raised one of his baby hands and pointed a tiny finger at the book I held in my hands, and upon whose pages my eyes were fixed in wide-opened astonishment, "that in thy country a story writer could not possibly squeeze a single one of his tales between those covers!"

King Gâ-roo laughed heartily at this speech.

After a few moments more of pleasant chat, I was dismissed by his majesty with promises of continued favor.

As I was backing out of the audience chamber, King Gâ-roo cried out gayly, as he shook a tiny finger at me:

"Look well after princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ, Little Man-All-Head!"

While seated in my apartment, the day following my reception at court and the presentation of the royal library to me, whiling away the time as best I could by dipping into the early history of the Umi-Lobas, I suddenly heard a great wheezing and whistling noise, as if some one suffering from the asthma were approaching.

Bulger gave a low growl.

I sprang up, and upon going to the door was not a little surprised to see Migrô-Zâltô, coming toward me with very short hops, every one of which drew forth a grunt.

However, he finally reached a seat in my apartment, and after half an hour's rest, addressed me as follows:

"I bring thee good news, Little Man All Head. His majesty, King Gâ-roo, has graciously resolved to appoint thee one of his Ministers of State. Polly-dotto has informed him that your head is exactly three times larger that the largest Umi-Loba's, and that, consequently, you must be at least three times as

wise as any of his counsellors. He is, quite naturally, unwilling that any other monarch should have the use of the vast treasure of wisdom stored in thy head. His design is to treat thee like a son, to surround thee with everything that gold can buy or cunning hands fashion, for thy comfort and amusement; in a word, so to shower honors upon thee that thou shalt soon forget thy home and kinspeople."

The effect of Migrô-Zaltô's words upon me was indescribable.

I felt as if my heart were about to beat its last.

It was only by the greatest effort that I could pull myself together, stammer out my thanks to his majesty, King Gâ-roo, and save myself from betraying my utterly disconsolate condition.

Behold me now a prisoner for life! For in spite of all these honeyed words, King Gâ-roo now proceeded to double the number of guards set to watch my movements, and thus head off any attempt at escape.

I, of course, pretended not to notice this extra precaution.

In fact, I put a smiling face over my sad heart, and pretended to be perfectly contented; to have given up all thoughts of ever returning home.

I took good care to let Migrô-Zaltô know that I now intended to begin studying the ancient history of his people.

With the princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ, too, I was all kindness and sympathy. But while I was thus engaged in throwing my keepers off their guard, I was diving deep into the folk-lore of the Umi-Lobas.

The books of the royal library, so graciously bestowed upon me by King Gâroo, stood me in good service.

I determined to get at all the weaknesses of the Umi-Lobas, in order to see if I could not discover some way to elude their vigilance.

It was all dark to me for the first few days, but at length I caught a glimmer of hope.

It came about this way:

The Umi-Lobas dread water. My own observation, as well as Poly-dotto's words, had directed my attention to this strange fact.

Provided by nature with limbs of such extraordinary strength that they can leap over streams, even thirty feet in width, they have a superstition that nature intended them to avoid touching the surface of a stream.

For the first, I now observed that they had no boats of any kind, and that their children, unlike other children, never played upon the banks of the beautiful streamlets which flowed in every direction around their homes.

"A boat is the thing I need!" said I to myself, every pulse beating with suppressed excitement.

But, ah! where to get it!

It were idle to attempt to build a boat or even a raft without attracting the attention of my watchers and raising an outcry.

I must abandon that idea.

By a strange fatality my bitterest enemy now came to my assistance. You doubtless remember how that animated coil of steel spring, Megâ-Zaltô, tried to kill me by placing tiny poisoned knife-blades in my bed.

Well, after that I never laid down at night that I didn't first pull off the cushions, drapery and coverings of my couch in search of any more of the same kind.

I never found any, for Megâ-Zaltô was still in disgrace, and forbidden, under penalty of instant death, to approach the royal palace.

But I did find something else.

It was this:

I discovered that my bedstead emptied of its cushions and clothes, was exactly the shape of a yawl boat; in fact, of so fine a model as to give infinite pleasure to my sailor's eye, and, most astonishing discovery of all, that it was already fitted with a staunch and shapely mast, the staff which supported the hangings. All I needed was a couple of thin, straight sticks for booms, and I would be able to take one of my sheets and rig a square sail in a few moments.

Here again I found myself face to face with an appalling difficulty.

Even admitting that I could elude the vigilance of my keepers,

how was I, all alone by myself, to transport the heavy bedstead to the water's edge, a quarter of a mile away!

I was upon the point of giving up the whole scheme.

The more I turned it over in my mind the more its dangers and difficulties increased.

I paced the floor with quick and anxious step, scarcely aware of Bulger's solicitude.

He was at my heels with vain coaxings, trying to quiet me down.

At last, in blank despair, I threw myself in a chair.

Bulger raised himself on his hind legs and gazed inquiringly into my face.

His tongue was out.

He was suffering from the heat.

For the first time I became aware of my condition.

The perspiration was streaming down my face. Suddenly a new idea flashed though my mind and helped out the old one.

Said I to myself:

"I'll complain to the King of the heat; I'll tell him how accustomed I am to outdoor life and sleeping in the open air with no covering, save the blue sky and twinkling stars; that I shall most surely pine away with inward wasting unless I be permitted to move my bed during the mid-summer heat down by the river side, where the air is coolest and purest.

King Ga-roo listened to my request without the slightest suspicion that any idea of escaping from his domain was flitting through my mind.

In fact, he would have as soon expected to see one of his royal beds spread its drapery for wings and fly away to the mountains as to see it go flashing down the river with one of the sheets set for a sail.

So my request was granted at once.

My bed was moved down to the river's edge, where one tent was raised to house me in case of a rain storm, and another to shelter the troop of guards which always kept at a respectable distance from me, and yet near enough to hop down upon me in about three seconds.

So far all had gone well. At first my plan was to launch my

boat and make my escape in the night, but I was obliged to give this up, for I discovered that the guard was always doubled at night fall.

Escape, if I escape at all, then must be in the broad daylight.

Six of the Umi-Lobas soldiers stood sentry about my quarters from sun-rise to sun-set.

That they were armed it is needless to say.

But their tiny swords and pikes had no terror for me.

With a stout club I could have beaten them down in a few moments.

Their terrible legs and feet, however, were quite another thing.

One blow from the feet of a vigorous Umi-Loba would have laid me dead on the ground.

I have often seen these guards amuse themselves by striking deep holes in the ground or by breaking stone slabs an inch thick with a single blow of their heels.

I must choose a different mode of eluding such dangerous pursuers.

They must be drugged.

But how to accomplish it?

To offer them all food at the same moment would most surely arouse their suspicions.

Then again, they did not all eat together.

So too, it would be worse than folly to attempt to drug their drink.

What was to be done?

Again my heart grew sick and faint within me.

I sat down to collect my scattered thoughts.

At that moment the attendant began to serve my midday repast. I glanced at the tempting dishes and sparkling wines. It was a feast fit for a King.

"Sir Pendulum-legs," said the serving man, with a low bow, "this is the season for O-loo-loo eggs. The first find was made to-day. The nest held six. His majesty sends thee two and wishes thee a pleasant dream."

Now let me tell you what this strange speech all meant.

The O-loo-loo bird is about the size of a quail, and lays from

six to a dozen eggs of a jet black hue. But as the bird, whose plumage is as black as a bat's wing, makes its nest in the wilderness, among the rank growth of a heather-like plant, of so dark green a foliage as to seem almost black, the eggs are invisible to the hunter's eye, and the nests can only be found by posting sentinels to mark the spots where the birds alight.

As you may imagine, O-loo-loo eggs are worth their weight in gold. Nay more, the people are forbidden to eat one.

Such is the King's command!

They all belong to him, and the finder must straightway bear his prize to the royal palace where a rich reward awaits him.

But the most mysterious thing about them is yet to be told! Not only are these eggs of most delicious flavor, but two of them are sufficient to throw the eater into a deep sleep, during which the most delightful dreams steal over him! Visions of exquisite loveliness flit before his eyes, and life seems so sweet and satisfactory that waking is really the keenest pain. The cause of this strange effect was for many centuries a mystery and the ancestors of the Umi-Lobas were wont to worship the O-loo-loo bird as a sort of sacred creature. But the mystery was solved at last. It was found that these birds fed upon the seed of the poppy plant, and hence the power of their eggs to cause sleep in those partaking of them.

I ate the two O-loo-loo eggs to test the matter, and in a few moments found myself sinking into a most delicious slumber.

When I awoke I saw light where darkness had lately reigned.

The way to escape from King Gâ-roo's guards was now clear to me. I at once proceeded to save up my O-loo-loo eggs.

In a few days, they became more plentiful, and it was not long before I had accumulated two dozen of them.

And now, thought I, if I offer them to my keepers as a feast, their suspicions will be aroused; they will refuse to partake of them, and the whole matter will be laid before the king and I shall be shorn of the little liberty I have. Therefore, I must use my knowledge of human nature.

As each man passed on his rounds I called him to me, and showing him four of the O-loo-loo eggs, said:

"I like thee; thou art my favorite, couldst thou be very close mouthed?"

The fellow's eyes sparkled with delight, and I could see that his mouth was watering at the sight of the dainty morsels.

Upon his assuring me that he would take good care that no one should know how kind I had been to him, I gave him four of the eggs, enough to make him sleep like a log for three hours.

He bolted them, shells and all.

I was much pleased with the working of my plan.

The next sentinel, who made his appearance a few moments after the first, was served in the same way. And so on with all the others. Each promised most solemnly never to reveal his good fortune to his comrades.

My plan thus far had worked splendidly.

In about a quarter of an hour I had the supreme satisfaction of seeing all six of them begin to rub their eyes, then yawn, then stretch their little arms up over their heads in the sleepiest manner possible. In less than half an hour they were all stretched out on the greensward, snoring like good fellows.

Now was my time to act!

I sprang toward my bed to empty it of its contents and launch it on the little river which flowed near by, when, to my horror, I heard the princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ calling, "Little Man All Hēad! Little Man All Head!"

A cold chill crept over me! There she came, hopping toward me like the wind, calling out for me to come and make her laugh!

What was I to do?

Strike her down?

Smother her?

Oh no; I could not have harmed that innocent little doll-faced being, had it been to save myself from life-long imprisonment.

Suddenly, like a flash of lightning, a bright thought flitted through my brain.

I have run, hopped, and stood on one foot, kicked one foot high in the air, crossed my legs, etc., to amuse the little princess, but I have never danced for her!

If she can find it amusing enough to laugh heartily at such

plain old-fashioned antics, she will surely go into convulsions when she sees me dancing a quick time jig with heels flying in the air.

So, calling out to her in my gayest manner, I said:

"Come, little princess, come little Umi-Loba. Hop this way! Be quick; I've something very funny to show you."

She didn't wait for a second bidding.

With two bounds she was beside me.

Bidding her be seated I began to dance and she began to laugh. In half a moment I quickened my step and she broke out into the wildest merriment.

"O, do stop, Little Man All Head," she gasped. "O, do stop, or I shall die!" I didn't want her to die, but I did want her to fall down into a swoon.

So now I let myself out.

My legs flashed like sunbeams dancing on the water.

Bulger looked on in dignified astonishment.

He failed utterly to make out what his little master meant by these furious antics.

Indeed they were furious.

Faster and faster my nimble feet beat the ground. Wilder and more uncontrolable became the laughter of the little princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ. The tears coursed down her pretty face she rocked from side to side; she bent forward and back.

Adding still more speed to my movements, I kept my eyes fixed upon her.

Victory!

The end came at last!

She rolled over on the greensward in a swoon.

"Now or never!" I murmured to myself.

In quicker time than it takes to tell it, aided by my faithful Bulger, I emptied the bed of its contents, set my shoulder to one end of it, while Bulger fastened his teeth in some fringe that hung from the other, and then, he pulling with might and main, and I pushing with all the desperation of a battle for freedom, the wooden structure was slowly brought to the bank of the river.

It was a hard task for us!

But we did it.

Now down the slippery bank it glided with a rush, striking the water and floating like a duck.

In an instant Bulger and I sprang on board of the little craft.

To rig up one of the sheets as a square sail and set it on the pole which had held the curtains was only the work of a few seconds.

A stout long-handled fan served me for a rudder.

Away! Away! I was off at last!

The wind was fresh and strong, and my square sail worked to a charm.

At that moment a shrill, piping voice reached my ear.

"Little Man All Head! Little Man All Head! Where art thou? Come to me!"

The shrill, far-reaching tones of her voice attracted a hundred attendants. They seemed fairly to spring up out of the ground.

Pell-mell, with a wild rush, the stronger ones leaping over the heads of the less vigorous ones, they made for the river banks.

Alarm bells now sounded on every side.

Gongs and strangely-sounding horns and rattles called the people to the spot where the little princess had been found lying half unconscious on the greensward.

The sight of the half dozen sentinels stretched out here and there in the deepest sleep, the scattered drapery of my couch, the bed itself missing, all told too plainly the story of my escape.

All this time, my snug little craft was making good headway down the river, which grew wider at every hundred feet.

With one wild outburst of shrill, angry voices, the Umi-Lobas turned to pursue the fugitive.

Buler whined piteously as he saw them swarming on the banks.

In another moment they began leaping from one bank to another, passing over our heads in perfect clouds.

I knew full well that they would not dare to leap into my boat but I feared that they might overwhelm us with showers of their little spears. However I determined to try the effect of one of my pistols on them if their spears annoyed me.

King Gâ-roo, beside himself with spiteful anger, now arrived upon the scene, and took command of his assembled troops and serving men.

First he tried entreaty upon me, offering me princely sums and royal honors if I would only turn back.

But I was deaf to his honeyed words. Whereupon he fell into a towering passion. He ordered his soldiers to recapture me dead or alive.

A shower of spears now whistled through the air.

Most of them fell far short of their mark, for the river had now widened so that I was at least thirty feet from the shore whereon they were standing.

But a few of these spearlets fell dangerously near me.

Fearing that their points might be poisoned, I determined to try the effect of a pistol shot in the air.

The loud report of the fire-arm, and the puff of smoke which followed it, filled the Umi-Lobas with the most abject fear.

They threw themselves on their faces and cried out that I was an evil spirit.

I could now see that King Gâ-roo had given orders to let me sail away in peace.

They made no further attempts to molest me, and yet it was very plain that they were loth to part with the "little man all head," for whom their King and the princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ had conceived so warm an affection.

I, too, felt a wrinkle in my heart as my little boat bore Bulger and me away on the rippling waters of the beautiful river now grown so wide that I was at least a hundred feet from the bank, and the palace of King Gâ-roo began to fade away in the distance.

For several miles they followed the banks of the stream, keeping opposite me, and ever and anon sending me a good bye in a soft and plaintive voice.

Strianing my eyes, I could see little princess Hoppâ-Hoppâ, borne aloft on the shoulders of a group of serving-men, and waving me a last adieu.

Then, once more, I caught the sound of that shrill baby voice:

Good bye! Good bye! Little Man-All-Head! Hoppâ-Hoppa says good bye forever!"

And so I sailed away from the land of the Umi-Lobas, the land of the Man-Hoppers!

In a few days the river began to broaden out and the land of the Umi-Lobas was left far behind! The moment I caught sight of any signs of human beings on the river banks, I steered my staunch little boat into a broad cove, whose sloping shores led to lofty table lands. Here, with tear-moistened eyes, I moored the little craft which had snatched me from a life of keen, though silent, sorrow, and followed by faithful Bulger, struck out boldly for the interior. After a few weeks' journeying I entered a country which was now and then traversed by traders. They were astonished to find me traveling all alone by myself, but readily accepted my statement that I had become separated from a troop of traders, and that my horse had died.

I now made haste to re-cross India and gain the shores of the Mediterranean, whence I took passage for home, with a joyous heart and a memory well-stored with quaint facts and curious recollections.

BULGER AND I SAIL AWAY FROM THE LAND OF THE UMI LOBAS (MAN HOPPERS) IN MY BEDSTEAD YACHT.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the streets of Constantinople, I fall in with an Armenian merchant, who presents me with a MS., 6,000 years old. It proves to be palimpsest. Its wonderful contents. I learn of the existence of a boiling sea, and set sail in search of it. Three of my seamen are swallowed by a marine monster. I rescue them. We reach Neptune's Caldron. Description of it and of its banks. Strange adventures there. We set sail for home, but are overtaken by a fearful storm which drives us on the coast of China. Bulger saves our lives. I am received with great honor by the dignitaries of the province—am quartered in the palace of So Too the Mandarin. Bulger incurs the enmity of the authorities. He is accused of having an evil spirit, and is arrested and put on trial. I defend him. He is condemned to death. My efforts to reverse the sentence are successful. Strange adventures in the palace of the Lord Taou-tai. Bulger and I are able to overcome all obstacles put in our way. We are accorded permission to set out for a seaport where we take passage for home. Our joy in finding ourselves safe out of the hands of our enemies.

SOME CROWS LIKE BOILED DINNERS.

While sauntering through the streets of Constantinople, one day, loitering in front of the bazars, or listening to the tales of some story-teller on the street-corner, I fell in with an Armenian merchant.

He was a man of varied attainments, had read much, traveled much, seen much.

We ate sweetmeats and drank coffee together for several days.

He was so delighted with my keen intellect, sharp, nipping wit, and great powers of imagination, that he expressed himself as being more than paid for his journey to Constantinople, although he had not yet opened his packs.

When the time came for us to part, he proceeded to loosen the leather thongs which held down the lid of a strange looking chest, whose top and sides were covered over with curious figures in inlays of several colors.

From one corner of this receptacle he drew forth a volumen or roll-book of antiquity.

To one end of it was attached, by a strip of parchment, a waxen seal, stamped with what seemed to have been a monarch's signet ring. This ancient and venerable book exhaled a very musty smell.

The Armenian handled it carefully, saying:

"It is quite old; some 6,000 years." Seeing astonishment depicted on my countenance, he smiled and continued:

"Yes, 6,000 years! It has only been unrolled far enough for me to decipher the nature of its contents. It treats of the human soul, and pretends to have solved its mystery completely —a problem which has baffled the philosophers of all ages. It even goes so far as to claim that the essence which we call "soul" may be taken out of a body and put into a bottle; that one soul may be thrust into a man's body to keep his own company, and that in this manner the whole world may be reformed, made over; evil being entirely destroyed and good only remaining.

"You smile, little baron, but it seems to me quite feasible. For instance, this rare old book quite rightly assumes that if we could thrust a good soul into a body already inhabited by a bad one, that man or woman would henceforth cease to do evil, or, at least, the good soul would continually betray its bad companion, and, altho' the man might plan a murder, he would not fail to inform some one of his dread purpose, and thus defeat his own ends."

"Or," continued the merchant, "take the case of a miser; by thrusting the soul of a spendthrift into his body, his inclination to hoard money and starve his family would be forever and always opposed by an ardent desire to waste his earnings, and the result would be that these two vices would neutralize each other; and so with a drunkard or a thief: by placing the soul of a water-drinker in the one and of a moral man in the other, a perfect reformation could be brought about. This is a valuable book, little baron, but I give it to you, merely exacting a promise from you that in case I am right in my understanding of it, you will impart the secret to the fathers of the church."

I gave the merchant my promise, and not wishing to accept so valuable a present without making some return therefore, I drew from my finger a ring containing the petrified eye of a basilisk, which, in the dark, emitted light enough to read the hour on a watch dial.

He was almost tiresome in his expression of thanks.

We separated.

I laid the ancient volume away in my chest and gave no thought to it until some time after my return home, when, one fine day, Bulger, attracted by its very musty odor, seized it by the vellum strip holding the seal and drew it forth from its hiding-place, then looked up at my face as much as to say:

"What is it, any way, little master?"

I determined to unroll the book at once.

The merchant had warned me to be most careful in so doing, lest the whole thing fly into a thousand pieces.

I therefore proceeded to prepare a wooden tablet or panel, which I smeared with a strong glue, so that, as the parchment unwound, it should be caught by this sticky surface and held firmly fast.

The plan succeeded admirably.

After several hours' close application I was overjoyed to see the volume entirely unrolled and held firmly and evenly to the surface of the panel.

Fancy my delight, after the glue had dried sufficiently to make an examination of the writing, to find that this ancient volume was a palimpsest!

I felt instinctively that this dissertation upon the nature of the soul was the sick man's dream of some poor dweller in the double darkness of ignorance and superstition. So I made haste to wash away his fervid outpourings by a plentiful use of something still hotter—namely, hot water and soap; for my studies had told me that the ink used by the people of his time and generation contained no mordant, and was, in fact, only lamp-black and grease.

I now got at the real contents of this venerable book.

The writing was dim and shadowy. I did not let that trouble

me, for, skilled as I am in the chemist's art, I lost no time in applying an acid which restored the writing to its old time blackness.

I had some difficulty in deciphering the language in which it was written—the ancient Phoenician—but, with the aid of several scores of dictionaries, I finally rendered it into a modern tongue, passing it through the Aramaic, thence into the Greek, and, finally, into my own tongue.

When at last I had gotten over all difficulties and could read the descriptions with that ease necessary to bring out their full sense, I was nearly beside myself with joy.

It was the story of a voyage made by a venturesome navigator, six thousand years ago, when the earth was still in its infancy; still hot in some places; in fact, only the highest mountains and table lands had cooled off enough to be habitable.

Pushing off from the shores of Arabia, this bold captain had pointed his ship towards the rising sun.

And, wonder of wonders! after many awful perils and terrible privations, he had entered waters which, to his almost unutterable amazement, grew warmer and warmer as he sailed over them.

At first his men refused to proceed any farther, but by dint of threats, persuasion and goodly presents, the bold sailor went his way, wondering and rejoicing. After many days he entered a body of water, which, from his descriptions, I at once recognized as the China Sea. But now all further advance was impossible.

In vain his oarsmen lent their aid to drive the little vessel forward.

Huge waves of heated water, always from the same direction drove his craft backward.

At last the truth of the matter dawned upon him.

He was on the outer edge of some vast boiling sea, which, rolling its hot waves ever outward, drove back his cockle shell of a bark. Making for a lofty promontory, he clambered to its highest point, wearing thick felt shoes and gloves to protect his feet and hands from the heated rocks.

A fearful and yet a sublimely beautiful sight met his gaze.

For hundreds and hundreds of miles the waters were in a state of most violent boiling, springing and leaping into the air as if a legion of giant demons were beneath forcing their hot breath upward from vast cavernous lurking places.

Upon reading of this boiling sea, I was seized with an uncontrolable desire to go in search of it.

True the waters might have cooled down in all these centuries, and yet I was confident I should find some trace of this once terrible caldron of seething waters.

The China Sea was only slightly known to navigators of my day and generation.

It had often been darkly hinted at that this vast body of water was studded with wonderful isles and filled with rare monsters.

I had no time to lose.

Hastily penning a letter of adieu to my father and mother, I joined my ship—accompanied by my ever faithful Bulger—and turned her prow towards the rising sun.

So well were the waters of the East known to me, from my long and close study of the most reliable charts, that I found I could almost steer my craft through them blindfolded.

It was not many days ere I entered this beautiful expanse of water, which, in the youth of the world, was filled with such marvelous creatures swimming on it and in it.

Onward, ever onward, through its dark blue waves, now mounting their foam-crested heights, now rocking like a thing of life upon this billowy highway, my trusty little vessel ploughed her way. Ten times a day, under plea of wishing to cool my brow in a basin of sea water, I called out to some one of my men to let down a bucket, but only to find, to my deep disappointment, that its temperature was no higher than is usual in those latitudes.

I began to grow low-spirited. My crew noticed my dejection, and at times my attentive ear caught murmurs of discontent.

To restore my men to their usual good spirits, I offered a reward of a thousand ducats to the one who should first discover that the water was growing warmer.

A thousand ducats!

It was a goodly sum, but I was growing desperate.

The large reward, however, had one good effect; it put new life into my men.

All day long buckets rattled against the ship's side.

Three of the more venturesome men hit upon a plan to earn the reward and divide it among them.

Lashing themselves together, they then lowered themselves down over the side of the vessel, until their feet just touched the water. Here they determined to stay, so that they might be the first to announce the increase of warmth in the water, and in this way make sure of the thousand ducats.

Suddenly a fearful outcry, accompanied by the most piteous whining on the part of Bulger, caused me to rush up on deck.

A sea-monster, a third as long as our ship, had risen directly under them.

Motionless with fright, they fell an easy prey to this terrible foe.

Opening his vast, cavernous jaws, he swallowed the whole three at a single gulp!

My men were wild with grief!

They heaped mad words of reproach upon me.

I had great difficulty in restoring anything like order or discipline.

My commands fell upon deaf ears.

At last I succeeded in quieting the raging, weeping crowd.

Knowing from my experience with such dread inhabitants of the deep, that this monster had only whetted his appetite by these morsels of human flesh, I directed my men to make haste and construct a straw man, using clothes of the same color as those worn by the three unfortunates.

Into the bosom of this effigy I stored away a quarter quintal of ipecacuanha, of prime quality, which, by good luck, I found in my stock of medicines.

The dummy was now lowered to the water's edge, at exactly the same spot where the monster had made his luncheon on my three excellent seamen.

We had not long to wait.

He rose to the bait in a few moments, and, opening his huge jaws, thrust out a tongue as large and as red as a roasted ox, and gulped down the savory morsel I had provided for him, with a rumbling gurgle which made my blood run cold.

Recovering myself, I sprang up into the shrouds and kept my eyes fixed upon this rare monster, who floated away lazily a ship's length and then came to a dead halt.

Ever and anon a quiver shot thro' the entire length of his body.

Evidently he was having no little difficulty in swallowing this last morsel.

Huge ridges formed about his neck and rolled backward till they were lost beneath the waters. A certain uneasiness now marked his movements.

He rolled from side to side, opening and shutting his jaws with a snap that sounded like the bang of two great oaken doors.

The dainty quarter quintal of ipecacuanha was manifestly beginning to distress him.

His rocking and rolling motion increased in violence.

At one moment his huge body turned upon its side, bent itself until head and tail met; at another it arched itself in the air until its black back spanned the waters like a bow.

I now felt that it was time to act.

"Stand by the starboard launch!" I called out to my men. "Avast that blubbering! All ready?"

"Ay! ay!" came back from the gang.

"Lower away, then!"

I was not a whit too quick with my orders.

The launch had no sooner struck the water than the sea-monster—after a series of terrible contortions, during which it almost seemed as if his huge body would be snapped in twain—began to disgorge the varied contents of his stomach.

First, shower after shower of many colored fishes, of all sizes, from a hand's length to three cubits, filled the air.

As they fell into the water, they calmly swam away, no doubt well pleased to find themselves in more agreeable surroundings.

Thousands of shell fish, all kinds, sizes and colors, then came

flying forth, rattling their claws together as they fell into the water, as if in defiance at their huge foe that had been so unceremoniously called upon to give up the results of many a long hour's hunt.

The living was followed by the dead, for now came forth several wooden buckets, three old blankets, numerous bits of plank, rope ends, shreds of sail, paint pots, bundles of oakum, and wads of cotton, all of which he had picked up while following in the wake of our vessel. At last the man of straw was cast out high into the air with a deep grunt of satisfaction.

After him came number one of the lost seamen.

Numbers two and three were not slow in arriving.

The launch made haste to pick them up, leaving the sick monster to recover his health and spirits as well he might.

Bulger received the rescued men with the wildest manifestations of delight, and clapping on all sail, away we bounded before a rattling breeze.

To my infinite joy, the water now began to increase in warmth.

Hour by hour the rise in temperature, although slow, was steady.

"At length, my men!" cried I to my crew, "we are on the right track. Be patient! I promise you that before the sun has quenched his fire in the western seas we shall cast anchor in Neptune's Caldron!"

My predictions came true to the very letter.

Just as the last rays of sunlight were gilding the foam-crested waves of this mysterious sea, a long, low line of shore was sighted dead ahead, ending in a precipitous headland.

Bearing away we rounded this and found ourselves at the entrance of a large land-blocked bay or gulf, from different points in which huge columns of snow-white steam floated lazily skyward, twisting themselves in most fantastic shapes ere they vanished in the purple twilight.

My men sent up a loud, long, lusty cheer, as we sailed into Neptune's Caldron.

As we drew near shore, to my great bewilderment, for I had

not dared to think that living creatures could exist in these heated waters, I caught sight of moving things in the Caldron. Nay, there could be no doubt, for these heated waters were as limpid as a mountain spring and the bottom plainly visible ten fathoms below.

Fish of all colors and sizes floated hither and thither, while myriads of crabs, lobsters and other queerly shaped crustaceans crawled about on the snow-white sands, following their leaders in long lines, like a procession of cardinals, over the white marble pavement of some great city in the western world.

I say "crimson lines," for the heat of the water had clothed them all in suits of richest red.

As I sat in the ship's launch on my way to the shore, gazing dreamily down into the waters, half-dazed by these marvellous sights, a shoal of fish rose near the boat and turned their beautiful tinted sides for an instant to the cool air.

To my amazement I saw that their eyes were sightless, that the extreme heat of the waters had clouded their limpid orbs milk white and shut out the light forever!

A cold chill crept over me, for, to me, the spectacle was as uncanny as if the carp had sprung from the elder baron's table and begun to swim about in their native element once more.

But the list of strange things was not yet exhausted, for as I drew nearer to the beach, you may imagine my mingled wonder and amusement at seeing scores of fish with their backs planted against the sand furrows, calmly fanning themselves with their broad, flat tails.

Upon setting foot upon the shore, I was astonished to find the land, for far as the eye could reach, covered deep with millions and millions of eggs of different sizes, varying from that of a pigeon to that of an albatross or wild goose.

In places these eggs lay in heaps far higher than my head; in others they were ranged in long lines, like white furrows turned by some gigantic plough!

Suddenly the truth dawned upon me. To these shores vast flocks of sea-birds came to lay their eggs year after year, attracted by the warmth of the atmosphere. There they build

their rude nests and fill them with eggs and enter upon the task of hatching out their young, when suddenly the heated waters hurled by some gale or resistless current, rises upon their resting places and spreads death where life was just beginning, by cooking the countless thousands of eggs which fill their nests. And so on from year to year, until now I behold the work of a thousand floods, which have in turn added their contribution to this vast stock!

While standing on the shores of this wonderland, one morning, gazing out across the steaming surface of Neptune's Caldron, several of my crew came running toward me with startled mien and great outcry, all pointing skyward. I turned and looked in the direction indicated.

A vast cloud, black and threatening, hung in the heavens.

As I stood watching it, it broadened and widened until it fairly darkened the light of day.

My men were now on their knees, uttering the most piteous lamentations, for they imagined the end of the world was at hand.

I commanded them sternly to leave off their wailing and groaning, for I saw that the great black cloud was simply an enormous flock of birds, of what species I could not then tell.

Nearer and nearer they came, with the sound like the rushing of wild winds.

They covered the whole sky like an inky pall.

It was evident to me that they intended alighting upon the shore of the Caldron, and fearing lest their immense numbers, in settling down, might smother us, I called out to my men to stand by the ship's launch.

There was no time to lose.

For, as we pushed out from the shore, tens of thousands of these birds—a species of crow, but twice the size of those at home—began to settle down in long rows as far as the eye could reach.

For the first, now I noticed that every crow held something in its claws. I looked again, and saw that each of these birds carried an immense mollusk, fully as large as a watchman's

club and something the same shape. Imagine my mingled surprise and amusement upon observing that those in the first row were now making for the water's edge. Approaching cautiously, each crow thrust his mullusk into the shoal waters of the Caldron and stood by, with eyes sparkling with joyful anticipation, to watch for results.

He had not long to wait.

Unaccustomed to the great heat of the water, the mollusk soon began to open its shell, first cautiously, but as the hot water poured in upon it, with great precipitation, fairly with a snap. Waiting for a moment or so until the hot water had curled the animal quite free from its shell, the fastidious birds then partook of the savory contents, gave a few caws of grateful acknowledgement, and withdrew to make room for the next row. This changing places, cooking of provisions and feasting lasted for half a day.

By that time the entire flock had exhausted its raw material. Then with deafening cries and loud flapping of pinions, these feathered epicures rose into the air and disappeared as they had come.

Fain would I have prolonged my stay upon the shores of Neptune's Caldron, but I observed that the steam from the waters was disagreeable to Bulger.

With speaking eyes, he implored me to hoist sail and seek some, to him pleasanter land.

I could not withstand that appeal.

So I made a farewell survey of the egg mounds, gazed my last at the red-shelled crustaceans and chalky-eyed fish of the Caldron and went aboard of my staunch vessel.

Heading now westward, I crowded sail, intending to hug the China Coast pretty closely on my homeward voyage. All went well for the first few days after leaving Neptune's Caldron.

Bulger ranged the deck, playing the maddest capers.

Thoughts of home now began to occupy my mind.

The elder baron was growing old. I felt that I ought not to prolong my voyage. He might be in need of my counsels.

Suddenly, one day, at high noon, the skies darkened, the winds sprang up.

I thought nothing of it.

It will only be a mad romp, which will serve right well to blow us along homeward.

But, oh, what a short-sighted creature is vain man, who thinks to read the signs of the skies, the winds and the waves!

The merry whistling of the wind soon gave place to the dismal howl of the blast.

The storm fiend was stalking abroad.

The startled waters now leaped wildly up from their beds, rolled tumultously onward, whipped into foam and fury by ten thousand lashes of the blast, till, in their mad efforts to escape, they dashed themselves against the very clouds.

The scene was terrible. 'Twas useless to command, for not a throat of steel could have drowned the wild yells of the tempest.

To my horror, I discovered that we had sprung a leak.

The pitch and tar, softened by the heat of the water in Neptune's Caldron, had bulged from the ship's joints and allowed the calking to escape.

Like a sheet of card board, our rudder was now torn from its place and whirled away on the crest of a giant billow.

Behold us now at the very mercy of the storm, the plaything of wind and wave, a cockle shell fallen on the battle ground of nature's warring elements.

Bulger, lashed to the rigging by my side, uttered no plaint, no cry of fear, no sound of distrust.

I could see that his speaking eyes were following me about as much as to say:

"I am not afraid, little master, so long as you are by me."

I could feel my heart thump out a loud "thank thee, dear, faithful, little friend!"

From time to time I passed my hand caressingly over his head and neck.

His tail moved sadly, but I knew its meaning.

It meant:

"Little master, I am ready to die; ay, most willing to die, if I can die with you by my side."

It really seemed as if his love was about to be put to a final test for the dreadful cry of—"Breakers ahead!" was passed from man to man till it reached my ears.

It was only too true.

Their roar now broke upon my ears, faint, low but deep, terrible, half like distant thunder or the growl of some gigantic beast of prey.

In a few brief moments we were on the reef.

With a terrible crash our staunch little vessel leaped upon the rocks and wedged herself in, tight and fast, between two jagged ledges.

The relentless sea now broke over and over us.

"Oh! if the day would only break!" I murmured, "possibly we might find some means to reach the main land."

To stay here simply means destruction.

After hours of the severest suffering, for every sea which broke over us seemed as if bent upon the fell purpose of tearing our limbs from their lashings—day came at last.

I discovered now that we were about a quarter of a mile from the main land.

With my glass, I could distinguish great crowds of people running hither and thither on shore. But they made no effort to send us succor or to encourage us to cling to the wreck until the storm should abate.

What was to be done?

With a fearful crash, our masts now went by the board.

Our ship was showing signs of breaking up.

Neither threat nor reward could move any one of my men to attempt to swim ashore with a line.

The sun now burst forth in a blaze of golden light.

I could feel the tears gather in my eyes as I looked about and saw the sad ravages of wind and wave.

Although the storm had abated somewhat of its fury, there was no time to be lost.

Dread creakings of the ship's timbers warned me to leave the wreck ere I should be crushed against the rocks.

Only disorder and confusion seemed to characterize the movements of the crowds gathered on shore.

While apparently aware of the terrible import of our signals of distress, they showed no inclination to risk their lives in trying to save ours.

Turning to Bulger I cried out:

"O, dearest Bulger! thou tried and true friend, companion of my sorrows and sharer of my every joy, thou alone canst save us! Thou alone canst rescue thy loving master and these poor wretched creatures from impending death! I know thy courage; I know thy affection. In thy radiant eyes I read thy willingness to do or die!"

From his earliest youth I had trained Bulger to be a bold and skilful swimmer. No eddy, current, undertow or whirlpool was angry or wild enough to strike any fear to his stout heart.

With ease, at my commands, he would dive two fathoms deep and bring the smallest coin from the bottom.

Our vessel might go to pieces at any moment, for she had wrenched herself loose from the rocky ledge and was pounding on the jagged, flinty edges of the reef with a wild and ungovernable fury.

Every fleeting moment became more precious than its predecessor.

Making a superhuman effort, I caught the end of a reel of twine, and, having fastened it to Bulger's collar, bade him leap into the bubbling, boiling, seething, swirling, madly-rolling waters, storm-lashed, whipped into foam, till billow broke on billow and all seemed but one mingled mass of fury, rage and fright. With a rapid succession of anxious, whining cries followed by a series of quick, loud, sharp barks, Bulger gave me one last look; and, placing his paws on the taffrail, sprang lightly over and disappeared.

My heart stood still for a moment.

But look!

He rises!

He strikes out for the shore, now tossed like a bit of cork on the arched backs of a storm-affrighted billow, now sunken out of sight into the foam-flecked trough of the sea.

Look again!

Hark! I can catch the faint sound of that sharp, joyous bark sent back to cheer his little master's heart.

And now he is gone!

I see him not; but as the twine runs through my hands, I can almost feel every throb of that dear, stout heart!

Steadily he keeps at his work, for steadily and rapidly the reel spins round.

Crack!

There goes our keel in twain.

Quick, good Bulger; the end is near!

But look!

What means that commotion on shore?

See the crowd, how it presses down to the very breaker's edge!

Now they fall back!

Hark!

Did you not hear that shout?

Saved! Saved!

Bulger has landed!

The men on shore have hold of the twine.

The reel whirls swiftly around!

My men, ashamed of their cowardice, crawl from their hiding-places and set to work with a will.

Already they have fastened a line to the end of the twine and it is moving briskly over the rail.

There can be no doubt now.

Bulger has saved us!

Springing into the main-shrouds and shielding my mouth from the gale with my hands, I called out to my men:

"Stand by the hawser! Make fast the line! Now heave, O! Let go all!"

With an angry splash the hawser fell into the sea and was soon on its way shorewards.

And this was the way Bulger saved the life of master, mate and twelve seamen!

I was the last man to leave the ship.

As I did so, she shook herself loose, drew back, ran hard on the rocks with such a terrific blow that she broke into pieces

as if struck by lightening bolt or some gigantic hammer wielded by an unseen Thor.

With a wild cry of joy Bulger met me as I was drawn through the breakers.

I threw myself on my knees and covered him with kisses, while tears rolled hot and fast down my cheeks.

The people of the land gathered group-wise about us and watched our interchanging of caresses in deepest silence, agitating their thumbs and twitching the corners of their mouths.

"What land is this? Where are we, good people?" I inquired, after this first outpouring of love and gratitude had spent its fervor.

"Bold barbarians!" replied one of the nearest group, whose richer dress bespoke the man of rank and authority, "thou standest on the shores of the mighty dominion of Kublai, Child of the Sun, Lord of the Imperial Yellow Garb, Knight of all the Buttons, Man of the Sacred Countenance, Successor to all the Glories of his Ancestors now Guests of Heaven, Source of all Law and Equity, and Chevalier of all the Orders, and we are his wretched, miserable, unworthy, good-for-nothing slaves!"

Whereupon the entire multitude performed the kowtow.

"So then! I cried, most puissant, noble, and altogether delightful, Sir,"—at the same time performing the kowtow with that grace which only the genuine citizen of the world can command—"I stand upon the sacred soil of the mighty Chinese Empire."

"Aye, bold barbarian," answered the speaker, "in the province of Kwang Tung, in the district of Yang-chiang, of which I, So Too, Mandarin of the White Glass Button, am Imperial superintendent." Hearing this, I begged So Too to give me leave to speak, which granted, in a brief but eloquent speech, well larded with all those savory epithets so sweet to the ears of an official in that land, I told him of my illustrious family, my strange desire to scour the remotest seas and least-visited lands for marvellous things; how I had sailed in search of Neptune's Caldron, of the strange things seen there, of my setting out on my voyage homeward, my encounter with the stormfiend, and

last of all, my shipwreck on the shores of the boundless dominions of the Child of the Sun.

And now, all that I craved from the servants of the Man of the Sacred Countenance was such aid and assistance as would enable me and my men to reach the nearest seaport where foreign ships cast anchor, so that we might go down to the sea once more and reach our loved ones. To all this So Too gave response with a most gracious smile, and then invited me to pass beneath his roof, lay off my wet clothes, drink some warm tea, and have his rubbers smooth the wrinkles out of my tired flesh.

My seamen were not forgotten. His retainers were ordered to look well after their wants.

Just as we were about to set out for So Too's residence, several of his body guards struck their gongs a furious blow.

The din was ear-splitting.

With a loud bark Bulger rushed towards me, and laying one ear against my leg closed his other with his paw.

So Too and his retainers, at seeing this to me laughable sight, looked grave, agitated their thumbs and twitched the corners of their mouths.

Just as I was about crossing So Too's threshold, to my inexpressible chagrin I discovered that I had lost my purse containing a large sum of money. In a desperate hope that I might have dropped it on the sea shore, I bounded away in that direction, but I had not gone a hundred paces ere I met Bulger carrying the purse in his mouth. I had in truth dropped it while kneeling on the beach and caressing my beloved rescuer.

Noting that in my eagerness to follow my gracious host, I had not missed the lost treasure, Bulger had driven away several of So Too's retainers, who manifested a desire to appropriate the pouch of gold to their own use, and picking it up in his teeth, had raced after me as fast as his burden would permit.

As we crossed So Too's threshold, several small, woolly dogs sprang out and gathered about Bulger. They were apparently delighted to meet with one of their race, so distinguished in appearance and dignified in carriage. Fain would they have

exchanged the usual canine civilities with Bulger, but he absolutely declined to enter into any conversation with them or to express any surprise at these extraordinary looking cousins of his, which seemed like so many animated bundles of freshly-ginned cotton. Keeping close at my heels, he skillfully avoided their advances, and gave a low growl of relief when the door of the ante-chamber was closed upon them.

After a warm bath, my stiffened limbs were limbered up by the stroking, patting and rubbing of So Too's bath assistants.

I was then invited to encase my body in a rich suit of embroidered silk, and this done, was conducted into the presence of the amiable So Too, who received me with a smile that was as persistent as it was broad.

Several hours were now consumed in drinking tea, eating dainty little sugar cakes, and telling each other the most extravagant and shameless fibs in the shape of compliments,—compliments about everything, voice, eyes, ears, chin, mouth, hands, feet, etc. Although I only reached to So Too's shoulder, he regretted, in a piteous tone, his lack of stature and praised my tall, stately, noble, commanding height.

Overcome at last by sheer exhaustion, So Too closed his eyes and appeared to have dropped off in a little nap.

Seizing upon the opportunity, I raised my voice and began to urge upon him the necessity of immediate action with regard to me and my men.

Whereupon he arose, and after a series of kowtows, the same broad smile playing around his wide mouth and small kindly black eyes—withdrew to consult with his assistant, sub-assistant, and first and second sub-assistants.

It was quite dark when So Too re-entered the room.

Bulger and I, during his absence, had slept most soundly.

No wonder, for we were both tired to the bone.

Orders were now given to illuminate the halls and apartments.

In a few moments, thousands of the most brilliantly colored and quaintly decorated lanterns shed a delightfully soft glow over everybody and everything.

Again we took our places around the superbly decorated table

which held the paraphernalia for brewing tea and the exquisitely painted cups and saucers of egg-shell thinness, and the tea drinking and cake-eating were resumed. Again I skillfully turned the conversation to the subject of my departure for the nearest seaport.

Again So Too arose and backed out of the room for the purpose of holding another consultation.

By this time my stock of patience had dwindled down considerable.

Every moment I could feel my blood grow warmer and warmer.

After a delay of half an hour or so, a retainer entered to inform me that So Too had fallen asleep in the council-room, and that no one save a Mandarin with an opaque blue, tansparent blue, flowered red or plain red button could presume to awaken him, and that there was no Mandarin of so exalted a dignity within fifty miles of that spot.

At these words my blood fairly boiled over.

I sprang to my feet and began to pace the floor like a caged animal.

Coming to a halt in front of a tall lacquer cabinet loaded down with costly porcelain cups and vases, I raised my foot, and kicking out vigorously, toppled the thing over on the floor.

The crash was terrible.

I was really startled, for I was afraid I had knocked half the house down.

But I had the satisfaction of seeing the Mandarin come rushing into the room, followed by assistants sub-assistants, gong-beaters, sword-bearers, head-shavers, ear-ticklers, tongue-scrapers, nail-polishers, and skin-rubbers, besides many others of his retainers, whose offices and callings were unknown to me.

"You have deliberated, now decide!" I exclaimed in a tone of voice that for depth and volume would have done credit to the hero of a blood curdling drama; and at the same moment I placed the sole of my foot against another cabinet, quite as lofty as the one I had just toppled over, and quite as richly laden with curios, vases and ivories.

So Too was now wide awake and not at all anxious to see this second cabinet share the fate of the first.

"Thy foot to its place!" he called out, waving me to a seat, and placing himself between me and the threatened cabinet. "Thy foot to its place, my gracious benefactor."

After he had seen me safely seated, he continued thus:

"Know, then, my gentle guest, that I, So Too, Imperial Mandarin of the white glass button, after mature deliberation with my most honorable Council, do order and decree that thou and thy servants shall be, as thou hast prayed, forthwith conducted to the city of Canton, and there be delivered into the keeping and custody of the officers of him of the Sacred Countenance, until opportunity shall present itself to procure means of sending thee and thy servants back to your native land!"

Here I bent my body in token of my profound gratitude.

The Mandarin likewise made a low obeisance, and then continued:

"I do further decree that the evil spirit which attends thee in the shape of a dog shall be at once bound with chains and cast into prison there to await his trial for witchcraft!"

Had So Too plunged a two-edged knife into my vitals I could not have felt a more agonizing hurt.

"Bulger? My beloved—Arrested? Witchcraft? Chains; Prison?" I stammered out.

"I have so decreed!" calmly replied So Too. "Oh! no! no! no! I cried, it cannot—it must not be! He is no evil spirit—no evil dwells in him. He is but a simple, loving, intelligent dog! I crave suspension of this terrible decree! What hath he done? O beloved Bulger, is this thy reward for saving fourteen human lives? Is this the way in which thou art to be repaid for all thy courage, thy love, thy devotion? O, no! no! Kill me if you will, cruel stranger, thrust me into a prison cell, but spare Bulger, spare him——"

I could say no more.

It grew black before me. A fit of vertigo came upon me. I staggered, reeled, fell lifeless to the floor.

When I came to my senses, So Too's servants were busy rubbing and chafing my hands and feet and burning pungent wax beneath my nostrils. Bulger, uttering the most piteous and

anxious cries, was hastening from one side to the other, pausing now and then for an instant to lick my hand or face. I sat upright to collect my senses; then clasping Bulger in my arms I patted, smoothed, kissed and caressed him amid a hundred sighs and groans, heartrending enough to melt a breast of stone. Then throwing myself on my knees in front of So Too, I implored him to be merciful—to spare a faithful, loving being, whose heart was as free from guile as the flinty rock from tenderness; whose life had but one thought: to serve, guard, defend, save his master."

"Rise, unfortunate stranger!" was So Too's reply, in a tone of deep commiseration, taking me by the hand and gently compelling me to be seated by his side. "List! If thou shouldst slice my body into ten thousand pieces I could not revoke this decree. Know that in this land of the Child of the Sun, a magistrate may not unsay his words. Mercy belongs to him, who dwells in higher places. This creature which thou lovest so, hath been adjudged to be an evil spirit. It is a favorite form of theirs; for as the dog is man's close and trusted companion, malevolent spirits are most likely to assume that form, when desirous of obtaining admission to his house and heart in order to work his ruin. This wild and unreasoning affection for thy dog proves only too clearly that the evil spirit which dwells within him has already drawn the black lines of his mysterious art thrice around thy soul. Thrice three times will complete his dread purpose. Thou wilt then be lost forever! 'Tis well that some good spirit of the air or water hath delivered thee into the keeping of the Child of the Sun. For now, upon the trial in the Imperial Chamber of Perfect Justice, thine eyes will be opened; thou wilt be fully persuaded that an evil spirit of tremendous size and fearful power is squeezed into that small creature."

"Never!" I exclaimed with flashing eye and glowing cheek.

So Too smiled faintly and laying his hand upon my arm continued: "Soft, illustrious guest, thou forgettest that Perfect Justice dwells in the bosom of our gracious Monarch. His ministers and judges have tongues; but they are not their own;

they only utter the thought of the Imperial mind; therefore, what they decree must be right!"

"And if the Court, "I inquired, with bated breath, "should decree that some evil spirit hath taken up its abode, as thou claimest, in the body of my faithful Bulger—what—what—would be the—the—penalty?"

"Death!" whispered So Too.

"And is this thy boasted justice!" I cried, with tear-bedimmed eyes, "to condemn a dumb creature to death with no voice to plead for him?"

"Nay!" interposed So Too, "thou shalt speak for him, thou shalt be heard in his behalf—thou shalt be his advocate."

"For this mercy," said I, "my heart empties its thanks at thy feet; and, if my words, my pleading prove not powerful enough to avert the fearful penalty thou hast named, the executioner shall but whet his axe on that small neck, for I shall lay my head beside this dearer head than shoulders ever bore! Blow out the spark that illumines those loving eyes and all this great world could not light a fire bright enough to cast the gloom out of my life!"

So Too shook his head mournfully, but made no reply.

Calling my men to me I spoke as follows:

"Go, honest souls, I cannot be one of you. Return to your homes and firesides. An Imperial escort will conduct you to the port of Canton. There, beneath some friendly flag you will find means to reach your native land! Peace and good fortune go with you!"

Then, turning to my first mate, I added:

"Seek out my father, the elder baron, impart unto him the story of my shipwreck; the arrest of Bulger; and my firm determination to save him from the terrible fate now impending, or to die with him! The elder baron knows my love for Bulger. He would deem me a degenerate son of his illustrous house, were I to abandon this faithful companion of my dangers and sufferings to so unmerited a fate. Go! Place this signet ring on thy finger. Deliver it to my mother, with my most dutiful and humble greeting. Be wise; be brave; be honest!"

My men now formed in single file, and as they passed in front of me each one paused and pressed my hand to his lips.

Bulger, too, was ready for the leave taking. Mounted upon a chair at my side he extended his right paw to each seaman.

Tears streamed down their weather-beaten faces and, they invoked blessings on the head of their brave little companion who had saved them from a deep grave in the briny waters.

Scarcely were they out of my sight when a deafening beating of gongs announced the arrival of the guard. My heart slipped from its resting place. A cold sweat gathered in beads on my temples. It was only with the greatest effort that I could draw breath enough to keep me from sinking lifeless to the floor.

So Too murmured a word of sympathy.

At the sight of the gailors and sound of the chains, I uttered a piercing cry and threw myself on my knees with Bulger clasped tightly in my arms. Poor, innocent beast! he was utterly unable to comprehend the actions of those about him.

"He shall be well-treated!" murmured So Too. "Fear not for his safety or comfort!"

The gailors now advanced, and stooping down, clasped the delicate manicles—which were of polished silver, upon Bulger's feet.

He looked up at me with eyes so speaking, so full of love and so trusting that I could not bear their gaze. It meant: "I submit without a murmur, for I know that thou wouldst not let any harm come to me!"

Then one of the guards lifted him gently and placed him in a silk-lined hamper, slung upon two poles. The lid was quickly adjusted and fastened, and ere I could collect my senses to speak a last farewell they hurried away with their prisoner, for it was plain to be seen their hearts were deeply moved by my woful countenance and grief-shaken voice.

At So Too's solicitation I now went to rest.

Rest? Alas! how could sleep get into my tearful eyes? All night long I lay awake bemoaning the sad fate which had overtaken me. Had accusation and arrest fallen upon me, I could have borne it like a man; but that Bulger's loving heart should

BULGER, IN CHAINS, BEGGING FOR HIS LIFE. ONE OF THE LITTLE BARON'S DREADFUL DREAMS.

have been singled out to bear a blow so undeserved was almost death to me.

As the hours dragged wearily along I thought of reversing my order sending my men away, and of attempting a rescue. I thought of schemes to bribe the gailor. I thought of demands for the interference of my government. I thought of an appeal for mercy direct to the Emperor himself. When day dawned I was utterly exhausted and sank back upon my pillow with a groan. Anticipating my inability to get any rest for my throbbing brow and fever-heated limbs, So Too was early at my chamber door with his attendants. Under his directions they bathed me in cooling lotions, patted, rubbed, and chafed my limbs; fanned me, stroked my wrists and temples, gave me draughts of quieting powders and gently pressed my eye-lids down, until gradually I sank into a deep sleep, which lasted quite until high noon.

I awoke with a strong heart. Now I was myself again. My sorrow had not grown less; but, for the time being, I was master of it.

So Too met me with a broad smile. I kowtowed profoundly. He expressed the hope that, his "tall, graceful, broad-shouldered, handsome visaged guest of knightly bearing" had slept well. As for me," he added, "my miserable, little, crooked frame was full of pangs and tortures all night long."

To look at him it was hard to see any effects of all these "pangs and tortures."

He seemed the very picture of good health and spirits. His broad face was as smooth as a baby's and his little eyes sparkled with suppressed humor and mischief. We grew quite merry over our morning meal.

I was playing a part. I determined to let him think that by degrees I was becoming cured of my extravagant affection for Bulger.

With every cup of tea he drank his cold exterior kept melting off. I felt that if I left him quite to himself, he would give me a clearer view of his inside nature than if I attempted to draw him out by leading questions. I called into use all my wit and imagination. I buried him beneath compliments and fine

speeches. I told him some of my most diverting stories. At last, I was successful. The servants were directed to withdraw. So Too now assured me in the name of all his ancestors, that I was the most delightful guest that had ever sipped tea beneath his roof. He entreated me to honor him by rising and placing my tall, graceful, knightly form along side of his miserable, puny little rack of bones.

I made haste to accept the invitation, protesting, however, that I was quite overcome by the honors showered upon me.

He maintained, with equal pertinacity that he was utterly unfit to occupy a seat by my side.

So we continued our war of compliments. Suddenly So Too thrust his right hand under his richly embroidered tunic and drew forth a small case of tablets, which folded upon each other in a curious way. He gave it a slight jerk and it flew open and unfolded itself. "I have been thinking," he began, "of the approaching trial of thy dog on the charge of witchcraft."

A lump arose in my throat at these words, but I gulped it down and simply bowed my head as a sign of my attention.

"Thou art a stranger in our land," continued So Too, "perchance thou wilt be pleased to know the things which I am about to tell thee. Nowhere else in the great world can Perfect Justice be found save in the dominions of our gracious Emperor, him of the Sacred Countenance. While thy nation and the rest of the Western world knew no other law than force or fraud, we had already received from our ancestors thousands of volumes filled with the rules of Perfect Justice. Happy indeed should be that criminal whose good fortune leads him to commit his crime in our favored land. His punishment will be exactly what he deserves. Thou, as the advocate of this fortunate prisoner, who is so dear to thee, art allowed to choose the yamun before whom he shall be tried. I, So Too, thy friend, do here set before thee the list of yamuns so thou mayst choose thine own arbiter."

Saying this, So Too placed the unfolded tablets in my hand, and then dropped off into a gentle doze.

I scanned the list with mingled awe and curiosity. It read as follows:

THE LIST ITSELF. ALL BY ITSELF.
OF AND NOTHING ELSE.
ONLY THE JUST JUDGES. ALL BY THEMSELVES.
FOLLOWED BY NOTHING ELSE.

I.	Ling Boss, - - - -	A Just Judge.
II.	Quong Chong, - - - -	A Just Judge.
III.	Poo Pooh, - - - -	A Just Judge.
IV.	Wah Sat, - - - - -	A Just Judge.
V.	Lung Tung, - - - -	A Just Judge.
VI.	Keen Chop, - - - -	A Just Judge.

The List of Just Judges. And Nothing Else.

Thinking that So Too was sleeping soundly, I half unconsciously murmured to myself, as I glanced at the first name on the list: "Ling Boss, a just judge!" When to my great surprise—which, however, I was careful not to show—So Too, without opening his eyes spoke as follows:

"Aye, a just judge; a very just judge; but a dangerous one; neck too short, too much blood—hence, brain too hot—never willing to hear both sides; a good judge for him who speaks first before the blood begins to press upon his brain, a bad judge for a long cause."

"Quong Chong?" I repeated inquiringly.

"A just judge," replied So Too, "an extremely just judge, but too tall and thin; not blood enough for his long body; brain too far away from heart; cold and merciless; does not eat enough, only a little fish; a good judge for a very bad man."

"Poo Pooh?" I suggested, in a low tone.

"A just judge, a thoroughly just judge," continued So Too, "but not to be trusted; laughs too easily; too much given to making puns; always ready to deal out death to a solemn-visaged

man; only too happy to sentence a man to death if he can make a pun with his name and the axe or block or something belonging to the executioner."

"Wah Sat?" I asked timorously.

"A just judge, an entirely just judge," said So Too, apparently half overcome with sleep, "but a judge to be avoided; too much given to asking questions; never weary of turning round and round like an auger, until he strikes bottom; a good judge for a hard and knotty cause—slow, but sure, eating away falsehood bit by bit; not a good judge for a plain case."

"Lung Tung?" I questioned, half in despair, glancing at number five.

"A just judge, an undoubtedly just judge, "So Too gave answer, in the same sleepy tone, "but a dangerous judge; too fond of hearing himself talk; too liable to use up the criminal's time and then condemn him to death for not having defended himself within the hour allotted to him!

Here my heart sank within me; but I drew myself together. There was still one name left. I glanced at it despairingly. "Keen Chop?" I murmured.

"A just judge, a perfectly just judge;" remarked So Too with a slight increase of animation, a flower, a pearl of a judge; eats well, drinks well, digests well; fond of the good things of life, a great lover of beautiful vases and statues and screens and embroideries—always willing to hear both sides and—"

Here So Too came to a halt and fell into such a sound slumber that he snored loudly. I waited patiently for him to finish his nap. He resumed exactly at the point where he had left off.

"Very anxious to build a larger and finer house and to fill it with rich and rare ornaments."

Again So Too dropped off. Not to be outdone by him in apparent indifference at the matters under discussion, I likewise gave way to a feeling of drowsiness and was soon fast asleep.

How long we slept I know not; but, when we awoke my mind was perfectly clear on one point. I turned to So Too and said:

"I am resolved! Keen Chop is a just judge! Let him decide Bulger's fate!"

Three days, long and anxious ones for me, went by before I was accorded a hearing in the Hall of Justice. So Too made great efforts to amuse me and turn my thoughts away from the poor innocent captive. But all in vain. Those dark, lustrous eyes were always fixed upon me. Day and night, they kept repeating the same question: "Dear little master what does it all mean? I know you will not desert me, but why must I be so long separated from you?"

At last the long-wished for hour arrived. I was escorted to the Hall of Justice by a band of So Too's retainers A seat was assigned me in front of the platform, which the judge and his suite were to occupy. The vast chamber was crowded with clerks, officers, gong-beaters, accused and accusers; but a deep silence rested upon them all. As I walked to my seat a subdued murmur ran over the multitude, for Bulger's case was in every one's mouth; and I could see that my youthful appearance excited great surprise.

Suddenly a beating of gongs announced the arrival of the judge.

Keen Chop entered the Hall of Justice with a majestic tread and solemn air, partly the effect of a pair of huge spectacles which were held astride his nose by heavy silken cords and tassels passed over his ears. He was followed by a vast array of clerks, servants and attendants. There were ink-bearers and pen-bearers; there were fan-bearers and book-bearers; there were foot-rubbers to chafe his feet in case they got asleep from long sitting; there were nose-ticklers armed with long feathers, whose office it was to arouse Keen-Chop should he drop off into too long a nap; there were eraser-bearers whose duty it was to blot out from the tablets all the judge had said when he resolved to change his mind. "Let the vile, miserable, wretched accused be brought into the august presence of Keen Chop, the just judge!" cried one of the Court officers, in a loud voice.

After a few moments' delay, the wicker hamper which contained my faithful Bulger, was carried into the chamber through a side entrance, set down in front of the judge and Bulger lifted gently therefrom and placed on a table at my side. The silver

manacles were still attached to his feet. My heart stood motionless as I heard the rattling of the chains which ran from leg to leg. I had steeled myself to appear calm; but in spite of my efforts, the tears trickled down my cheeks. Bulger gave a start as his dark, lustrous eyes fell upon me and he uttered a long, low whine as if to ask: "What does all this mean, dear, little master?" And then he raised his right paw as high as the chain would permit, and held it out for me to shake—as was his custom when craving forgiveness for some mischievous act which had displeased me.

I pressed the outstretched paw long and tenderly.

"Doth the prisoner confess his guilt and humbly beg for mercy at our hands" inquired Keen Chop turning his huge eye glasses full upon Bulger. Whether it was the disagreeably shrill and creaking tone of the judge's voice or the glitter of the large glass discs set in front of his eyes, which displeased Bulger, I know not; certain it is he made answer for himself with a single loud and angry bark. Keen Chop was so startled that he dropped his smelling salts and motioned to his fan-bearers to cool his heated face.

"Silence!" roared one of the gong-beaters, giving a deafening thump upon his gong to inspire respect; and, at the same time fiercely agitating his bristling eye-brows and mustachios.

"My lord judge," said I performing the kowtow, "I crave consent to speak for the prisoner. He is not guilty of witchcraft. Nor doth any manner or kind of evil spirit dwell within his body. He is a true and faithful servant and companion of mine; perchance, with somewhat more than the usual intelligence of his kind. As his defender I call for the proofs of this most unmerited accusation!"

Keen Chop now fell asleep. But, after a few moments, his nose-tickler succeeded in arousing him.

"Let the proofs be read!" spake Keen Chop in slow and measured tones. One of the clerks arose; and unfolding a huge sheet of paper, with wooden rollers fastened at the top and bottom like a window shade, began to read in a drawling, singsong voice as follows:

Proof First: That the prisoner did, without any command, upon reaching the shore from the wreck, proceed to bite the twine attached to his collar in twain; and, taking up the end in his mouth, pass by a group of imperial officers, and a group of merchants, and a group of artisans, and a group of idlers, and make for a group of sailors, at whose feet he laid down the end of the twine.

Proof Second: That the prisoner did, at the sound of the official gong, unlike the animals of his race dwelling among us, manifest great displeasure and ill-humor, rush towards his master, lay one ear against his master's body and close the other with his paw.

Proof Third: That the prisoner did, on the same day, in the presence of imperial officers, without any command, pick up a purse of gold dropped by his master and restore it to him.

Proof Fourth: That the prisoner did, on the same day, in the presence of imperial officers, upon crossing the threshold of the Lord High Mandarin So Too, unlike animals of his kind, contemptuously and disdainfully reject the kindly welcome and friendly greetings given him by his Excellency's dogs.

I confess that, as the clerk of the Court finished reading these proofs, my heart rose slowly into my throat. They were, in good earnest, proofs of far more than the usual intelligence of animals of his race. I was staggered by the amount of proof they had collected. While I felt that I should have difficulty in persuading Keen Chop that all this was only the result of careful training, aided by a special aptitude on Bulger's part, I was very careful not to betray any nervousness or lack of confidence.

I called for some tea, on a plea of needing refreshment; but really to gain time to collect my thoughts and get myself together, after such a staggering blow.

Meanwhile, Keen Chop dropped off into a calm doze.

I finished my tea and sat waiting patiently for the nose-tickler to arouse him.

When I saw that Keen Chop was wide awake again, I arose

with great dignity; and, placing myself beside Bulger, who was watching my every movement and listening to my words with an almost painfully anxious expression, which meant only too plainly: "What does it all mean, dear little master?" I began as follows:

"My Lord Judge! Most ancient, antique and venerable Patriarch, stricken in full five score of honorable years, thy snow-white locks bespeak thy wisdom!" The fact of the matter is, Keen Chop was quite a young man, and so far as I could see had no hair at all on his face or head save a scanty pig-tail; but I knew how flattering it was to a magistrate to be called "old and venerable" and hence my desire to make a good impression at the very outset. "My mother's breast knows no other child than me and I no other brother than this faithful creature whom heaven, for its own good reasons, hath set upon four feet; but who, if the strength of love could lift him up, would walk beside me, our two hearts on the same level. O, venerable judge—whose wisdom, like fair fruit red-ripened in the Autumn season, is now so ennobled by the flight of time, thou knowest what love can do! Thou knowest full well how it can so steel the thin beak of the mother bird, that the merciless talons of the hawk have no terror for her! Thou knowest, better than this poor bit of humanity which now pleads before thee, that man's spear hath not point sharp enough to drive the bear from her cub! Thou knowest how the timorous sparrow, to shield her nestlings, will face the viper's horrid crest, forked tongue and stony eye! And what shall I say of this faithful creature's race? When lived there one of his kind that was known to desert a poor and humble master, for a richer one; or to refuse forgiveness for a rash and undeserved blow? Where else can human hearts invest their love and draw such usurer's rates as here? We were babes together! The same sunbeams that danced a welcome on my awakening into life, found him, too, just arrived. Of quicker growth, he was his brother's keeper. I gave him all my love, for no other playmate was there to share it. I planted better than I knew, for on the thankful soil of his true heart, that love of mine

struck such deep and vigorous root that it gave of its strength and power to his brain! Love hath so sharpened thought, that it hath grown wondrous strong! The spirit, thou callest 'evil,' is, as the learned know, a reasoning being; and, although it may go upon four feet and whine, and yelp, and growl, and bark, this is but the mask it wears.

"O aged judge, in the vast storehouse of whose mind experience hath piled wisdom many stories high, thou wilt ere long believe me, for I shall make it most plain to thee—that this faithful, loving animal, is not gifted with the mysterious power of reason! True, most true, nature hath widened his vision; but not removed its boundaries.

Mark now, O learned patriarch, how easy a thing it is for truth to pierce the armor falsehood wears,, for gird she ne'er so tightly, there are always some joints that will not come together!

"If my poor, weak mind be not strong enough to brush away the so-called proofs of this evil spirit, then let me be withered by the flame of thy just indignation! This creature loves me! Not the vigor of ten-thousand human hearts blent in one could yield a warmer love than his for me! And yet behold how short its vision is!

"This curious fire-arm was given me by a Turkish merchant whose life I saved in a brawl. I have so set it that a feather's weight will discharge it; but, first I smeared some sugar paste upon its trigger. Lo! I turn it toward my breast! If this creature now hath but the faintest glimmer of impending harm to his beloved master, he will refuse to lick away the sugar paste!"

A deathlike silence fell upon the assembly. I held the fire-arm out towards Bulger. In an instant he scented the sweet odor of the paste and thrust his tongue out in several unsuccessful efforts to reach it. A sharp explosion rang through the great hall.

I stooped and picked up the ball—which had flattened itself upon a steel plate hidden beneath my robe.

Bulger's amazement was not so great as Keen Chop's. He

made signs for refreshment. Tea was hurriedly served. A hundred fans wafted the sulphurous vapor away from his nostrils.

"Once more, O wiser judge than ever in Western Lands, shed the radiance of human wisdom on things dark and obscure, behold how I tear away the weft of falsehood which some ingenious mind would have this august tribunal adjudge to be pure truth! Here, on this salver, I hold some toasted bits of cocks' combs—to this creature's taste, the daintiest morsel which nature and art can unite in producing!" Catching a sniff of his favorite dish, my good Bulger began to bark and whine and strain his manacles to their utmost in wild endeavors to reach it. I held the salver out so as to permit him to reach a few pieces of the toothsome food. He was now beside himself; one moment begging, coaxing, pleading; the next, scolding, threatening, expostulating. No doubt he was very hungry, for it was hardly to be expected that the prison messes would suit his dainty palate.

"Most venerable judge!" I resumed, "as thou well knowest, evil spirits hold in great repugnance and dread all subtle and mysterious brews and poisonous compounds with which man strives to display or destroy them. Look now! I sprinkle this coveted dish, before his very eyes, with a powder so deadly and direful in its effect on life that this weak hand of mine holds power enough to change this mighty hall filled with light and life, into one vast charnel house. And again I bring the food within his reach, covering it with a sheet of glass lest his ardor out-wit my vigilance!"

Bulger now fell upon the plate of glass which covered the food, with renewed impetuosity, giving vent to sharp cries of disappointment as he vainly endeavored to lick up the tid-bits, rattling his chains as he strove to scratch away the glass which kept him from his expected feast.

Commanding him to be silent, I uncovered the dish and set it within reach of several dogs which I had caused to be tied near at hand.

At the first touch of the poisoned food they fell to the ground as if stricken by a thunderbolt.

"Again, most sapient and venerable judge, let me add proof to proof that naught of reason dwells within the mind of this faithful creature!"

"I was wounded once in his sight by a treacherous slave. His dagger point pierced my breast; but I smote him dead ere he could find my heart. Yet the danger of that moment seared the image of that poniard forever on this creature's memory.

Bid now a retainer turn a dagger towards my breast!"

It was done!

With frantic cries and wild-starting eyes Bulger strove to leap upon my supposed assailant.

"Cover now the blade with its sheath!"

It was done!

Again my good Bulger made desperate efforts to reach the man, filling the room with cries of rage and fear.

"Cast away both sheath and blade!"

'T was done!

But still my loved Bulger made maddest effort to protect his master.

"Cast away the heft and blade and raise the empty sheath against my breast!"

'Twas done!

Still it was all the same! No matter whether covered or uncovered point; whether harmless heft, or still more harmless sheath, was turned towards my breast, Bulger's cries of mingled rage and fear, his mad attempts to break away from the shackles which bound foot to foot were first and last, exactly as fierce.

Keen Chop now did several things. He drank some tea. He ordered one of his menials to tickle his ear. He removed his huge spectacles and handed them to an attendant who proceeded to polish them. He then attempted to fall asleep. But, at a sign from me, Bulger began to bark so furiously that he gave a sudden start as if he thought the animal was about to lay hold of his calves. Taking advantage of this, I strode up in front of Keen Chop; and fixing my gaze upon him, spake as follows:

"Most ancient Magistrate, I crave your gracious consent to

add another plea to my defense of this dumb creature. I would be the veriest ingrate, whom any wretched outcast might, with justice, spurn and revile, were I not to defend this devoted being with all my mind's cunning and heart's love!"

With these words, I sprang lightly up the steps which led to Keen Chop's chair, and ere he could say nay, caught up his fan which he had just laid down on the table beside him.

"Now, venerable judge, for a last,—and I trust overwhelming —proof that no evil spirit dwells within that creature's body."

Here are two fans: Thine! Mine! Thine, made sacred by the touch of thy age-palsied and time-stricken hand! Mine, a worthless trifle; if it were possible, made still more worthless by the touch of my worthless hand. If, as this Court hath charged, an evil spirit dwells in this animal's body, it knows full well that power of life or death hangs on thy lips; that thou canst pardon with a smile or slay with a frown; that thou canst condemn to lingering torture or strike his shackles off with a nod!

Ay, more! that if it should, to thine eyes seem meet and wise, thou canst adjudge both master and dog worthy of death and grant them no greater boon than that their blood shall flow together after life is over, as their love was one when living!"

"Behold, I cast these two fans at his feet!"

Loud murmurs broke out all over the vast assembly. Many rose in their seats and craned their necks to watch the result.

Bulger looked up at me with a puzzled air at first; but his mind was soon made up. He picked up my fan tenderly and carefully, and with wide-opened, love-lit eyes, raised himself on his hind feet and laid it in my lap, wagging his tail the while, as much as to say: "Never fear, little master, I know what belongs to thee!"

Then, with an outburst of snarling, barking and growling, threw himself upon Keen Chop's fan, shook it savagely until the richly painted covering was torn in shreds and lay scattered about; tossed it up in the air, only to leap upon it with all fours as it touched the floor; and then, setting his stout claws in its joints wrenched them asunder as if they were made of paper.

But this was not all!

To complete the list of indignities which he had visited upon Keen Chop's property, he now turned his back toward that grave magistrate; and by several sudden and vigorous kicks with his hind feet, sent the sticks in a shower flying so close to his head that one actually struck against the huge disc of glass placed in front of Keen Chop's right eye. But a court officer, who had fallen sound asleep, and let his head fall backward, did not escape so luckily. Two of the largest sticks entered his nostrils and remained sticking there like arrows in a target. The man awoke with an ear-piercing shriek. In spite of the commands of the court officers, that every one who laughed should be bastinadoed, there was suppressed giggling here and there. Keen Chop himself twisted his face into the most comical grimaces in order to keep from bursting out into a fit of laughter. As for Bulger, he was beside himself with pleasure. In fact, he fairly howled with joy. Keen Chop now moved his thumb as a sign that he was about to speak, and a deep silence fell upon the multitude.

I was summoned to approach the steps of the judge's chair. He spake as follows:

"When thou art taller, thou wilt be stronger! When thou art older, thou wilt be wiser!

"Know then, that, as the abject slave of the Child of the Sun, him of the Sacred Countenance, Lord of all the Orders, I had intended to dismiss this charge against thy dog, cast off his manacles and set him free. But it may not now be done!

Thy pleading hath convinced me that he doth deserve to die! A just cause needeth no other defence than words. But thou hast pleaded with hands and legs and feet! Thou hast been over-earnest! 'Tis proof, thou knewest the weakness of thy cause. Hadst thou not spoken at all and had thy dog himself but oped his mouth at the very outset, what had fallen therefrom would have freed him from his shackles.

Now he must die!

Let him be delivered to the public executioner!" And then, with a motion of his hand, he ordered the gongs to beat, so that

it was impossible for me to make reply. The great chamber was now the scene of the wildest hubbub. The guards crowded around me as if they feared I might, in my desperation, sacrifice my life in attempting to rescue Bulger.

Poor Bulger! He had been quickly lifted into his wicker cage and borne out of the court-room.

Although I could feel my heart hammering on my ribs I gave no sign of the storm of emotion that was sweeping over my inward being. I could hear those terrible words "public executioner" ringing in my ears; but my infallible second sight caught no glimpse of that dreadful officer, and hence I felt that there was still hope. But, I moved neither hand nor foot.

The gongs ceased beating.

The throng departed from the hall of justice.

The guards, kowtowing, backed out of my presence. I stood there alone in that vast, silent chamber.

I was aroused at last from my deep reverie by the approach of a messenger from Keen Chop. He thus addressed me:

"The wretched, little, misshapen Keen Chop humbly begs the tall and stately stranger to drink tea with him in his private apartment."

Mechanically I followed the judge's servant, who lead me through long and winding corridors. Keen Chop had laid off his huge spectacles and received me most graciously.

All the servants were dismissed. We sipped our tea in silence for a while. At length, rising and stepping behind a screen, he returned, bearing a huge volume.

It was the record of Bulger's trial. He desired me to examine it while he refreshed himself after his long sitting on the judge's bench with a short nap.

I turned the leaves of the record over slowly. Not only were my words set down with the most perfect accuracy, but correct drawings of the various scenes filled the broad margins of the record.

On the last page I noticed that a blank space had been left between the words "must" and "die" and "him" and "be delivered."

"'Tis miraculous!" exclaimed Keen Chop, starting up and rubbing his eyes. "What a wonderful creature is thy dog! As I slept I dreamt that he oped his mouth and what fell therefrom convinced me of his innocence."

"Let him be brought into your august presence, O just judge!" I replied.

In a few moments Bulger's wicker house was deposited on the floor and he was lifted gently out of it. I could only with the greatest exertion keep back the tears as his large, speaking eyes were turned full upon me as if to ask: "When will all this mystery come to an end, little master?" I stroked his head with a loving hand to assure him that all was right.

No sooner were the attendants out of the apartment than, taking the purse of gold which Bulger had picked up on the beach and restored to me, I placed it in his mouth and made a sign for him to carry it to Keen Chop, who had now resumed his huge spectacles, and sat poring over the pages of the record of Bulger's trial.

Bulger did not wait for a second bidding.

Making straight for Keen Chop, he raised himself on his hind feet and dropped the purse in that dignitary's lap.

"'Tis wonderful! 'Tis very wonderful!" cried Keen Chop, testing the weight of the purse, with a pleased expression of countenance, first in one hand and then in the other. "Thy speech was silvern, but his silence is golden! 'Twere a crime to part two such faithful hearts. Go in peace!"

"But the record of the trial?" I asked. Keen Chop spoke not, but turning to the last page, he laid his finger on the place where the blank spaces had been left.

They were now both filled.

The word "not" had been written in each of them.

The guards were now summoned, and in a few moments the shackles were loosened from Bulger's feet. Upon finding himself free once more, he leapt into my lap with a wild cry of joy, and covered my hands and face with caresses.

I could not keep the tears back. Clasping the faithful animal convulsively in my arms, I wept like a child.

But a cloud came over our joy; for Keen Chop, upon my request for a safe conduct to the nearest seaport, informed me that he was powerless to grant my request; that I must apply to Slim Lim, the Taou-tai, or Imperial Governor of the province, Lord of the Peacock Feather, Knight of the Plain Red Button, etc., etc.

"'Tis well!" I exclaimed. "Deign to send one of thy servants to conduct me into the presence of his honor the Taou-tai! I pine to set foot once more on my native strand. I long to put an end to the sorrowful anxiety of my parents."

Keen Chop shook his head and smiled sadly.

"Know, O honored guest," said he, "that no one may approach the Taou-tai, Lord of the Peacock Feather, unless in answer to most humble petition of twenty pages length, his high and mighty Lordship deign to accord an audience! To attempt to do otherwise might mean death at the hands of the guards; but would most surely mean imprisonment in the deepest dungeon of the imperial fortress."

"So be it!" I replied. "Come death, come imprisonment, I stand this day in the presence of Slim Lim the Taou-tai, Knight of the Plain Red Button, and Lord of the Peacock Feather!"

Keen Chop groaned loud and deep. But seeing that I was resolved to set out at once for the governor's palace, he sent one of his attendants to conduct me to the gate, instructing him, in case the guards raised their swords to slay me, to cry out in a loud voice that I was a harmless lunatic and had escaped from my keepers.

To end all opposition I consented to this.

Whereupon Keen Chop bade me an affectionate adieu, and, followed by my faithful Bulger, I turned my steps toward the palace of the Taou-tai.

To tell the truth, chaos reigned within my mind.

In as many seconds, twenty different plans of action occupied my thoughts. How shall Bulger and I overcome the opposition of armed guards? It will be madness to provoke them to use their weapons upon us!

If I am fated to stand in the presence of the Lord Taou-tai, it must be accomplished by ruse and strategem.

Luckily for me, the shades of night now began to fall, for, although the gateway and corridors of the governor's palace might be illumined by ten thousand lanterns—as in truth I found them to be, when I reached them—yet the light they shed was soft and uncertain.

Counting upon the almost lightning celerity of my movements and the utterly noiselessness of my footsteps, I succeeded quite easily in flitting by the group of sentries who were stationed at the outer gate.

Delighted with my good fortune, I sprang lightly up the steps of the portico, and, closely followed by Bulger, strode into the main corridor with dignified mien and stately air.

Eight towering fellows, armed with savage-looking pikes—for one of whom it would have been no more trouble to spit me and toss me out of the window, than for a boy to impale a frog on the end of his pointed stick and toss it on dry land—now blocked my advance.

So noiseless had been my step that I had approached within a few feet of them before they became aware of my presence. Had I dropped from the clouds, their astonishment could not have been greater and more ludicrous to behold.

They clutched each other by the arm, leveled their index fingers at me, and whispered in a hoarse voice, as one man:

"A little devil!"

"Nay, my good men," I replied, with a most gracious smile, "not a little devil, but a soldier like yourselves; one who has fought 'neath many skies, knows what a good sword is, what good wine is, would rather fight than run, can tell a good story, and loves war as a hunter loves the chase!"

The eight men looked at each other, tapped their foreheads significantly, and then fixed their gaze upon me as if they were in doubt whether my next move would be to jump down their throats, vanish into thin air, or expand into an awful ogre, and gulp them all down without pepper or salt.

"Come, comrades," I called out in a careless tone, lay aside your pikes, and I'll show you something that I picked up on a battle-field in the war against the Algerines, something so curi-

ous, that if you had not slept a wink for three months and a day you would still be willing to keep awake and examine it."

Saying this, I drew my musical snuff box out of my pocket, and tapping its lid mysteriously, tiptoed my way towards the outside entrance of the corridor, and beckoned them to follow me.

They did so, with the most comical expression of half-wonder and half curiosity depicted on their faces. But first they quietly set their grim-looking pikes in the rack against the wall.

Motioning them to lay their heads together and bend down so that they could see and hear—for I reached about up to their girdles. I touched the spring of the snuff box and it began to to play.

It is impossible for me to give you any idea of the delight which shone upon their great, round smooth faces.

Their mouths fell open.

Their fingers twitched nervously, as if they longed to touch the little wonder, and yet dared not. I felt now that the moment had arrived for me to act.

Winding up the snuff box to its utmost limit, I thrust it into the hands of one of the guards, who seemed beside himself with joy, and showed him how to touch the secret spring.

As the music began again, they closed up their group so tightly that even if I had wished to remain one of the circle it would have been an impossibility. To my infinite satisfaction they now seemed to dismiss me most unceremoniously from their society.

More quickly than it takes to tell it, I drew a ball of strong twine from my pocket, and fastening the ends of their cues securely together, I retreated to the outside entrance of the palace and placed the other end of the string between Bulger's teeth, with a motion that meant:

"Stand fast and pull hard!"

In another instant I had passed the group of guards and was making for the door of the audience chamber.

Suddenly the enormity of their negligence dawns upon them They look up.

They see me already at the end of the corridor!

They drop the enchanted box which has decoyed them from the path of duty!

They start towards their pikes!

Some mysterious force holds them chained to the floor!

Bulger is doing spendid work!

My hand is on the door of the audience chamber!

Smitten with a superstitious dread of some unseen power, the guards stand rooted to the spot.

A low whistle tells Buger that his task is complete.

He flashes through the corridor like a spirit.

We enter the vestibule of the audience chamber, we pass through an outer apartment, we stand in the presence of Slim Lim, Lord of the Peacock Feather!

Slim Lim was at home.

He was seated in the centre of the spacious apartment, sipping a cup of very fragrant tea, the aroma of which was so fascinating that I paused and inhaled it with all the gusto of a fine taster.

Two ladies, clad in robes of great beauty and richness, were busy brewing tea and spreading before the Lord Taou-tai an infinite number of delicate viands and toothsome tid-bits.

But he ate nothing.

He was evidently somewhat disturbed by my sudden appearance, and I could see that one thought, to the exclusion of all others, was occupying his mind. It was: "How did this stranger pass the guards? True he is small; but if he can calmly walk into my apartment why may not an evil-disposed person do like-wise?"

Determined to convince Slim Lim and the ladies of his household of my noble lineage and refined manners, I kowtowed with all the grace of a veteran courtier, and began the enumeration of their various virtues, excellencies, and charms of body and mind. When I had reached number one hundred and seventeen, the victory was complete.

They smiled.

But Slim Lim remained obdurate. He gazed into vacancy for several moments and then pretended to fall asleep.

I recited the purpose of my visit and waited patiently for the Lord of the Peacock Feather to deign to reply.

He did so at last; but without opening his eyes, speaking as if half in a dream:

"Barbarian, son of a barbarian, grandson of a barbarian, great-grandson of a barbarian, great-great-grandson of a barbarian, great-great-great-grandson of a barbarian——"

Well knowing that this was a mere ruse to waste the night in words, I resolved to put an end to it at once.

I sat down and interrupted Slim Lim's long and dreary list by pretending to snore with that regularity which proves the accomplished sleeper.

He came to a sudden halt.

A deep silence now settled upon the scene, only broken by the nervous rattle of the ladies' fans.

Slim Lim now began to realize that he had no ordinary mortal before him.

For the first time he looked me squarely in the face.

The ladies grew alarmed at the dark cloud gathering on the brow of their liege lord, and withdrew to the other end of the room.

The Taou-tai was now wide awake.

So was I!

"Bold, thoughtless, and ill-counselled stranger," he cried out, "by the decree of the Child of the Sun, him of the Sacred Countenance, it is not lawful to punish a rash petitioner like thee, provided his prayer be one that may be granted. But what thou askest is impossible, for at this hour there is neither paper, ink nor brush within the palace! Thou must suffer for thy rash conduct. Thou hast been cunning enough to pass the guards in coming hither: but already a score of pikes are leveled at thy breast. Escape is impossible. Prepare for death or imprisonment in dungeon cell which knows neither light nor warmth!"

To speak the truth, my legs bent beneath the weight of my body as these cruel words made clear to me the danger I was in.

I could see that tears had gathered in the eyes of the two gracious ladies, standing near me.

"Paper—ink—brush!" I murmured, half dazed, "brush—paper—ink—or death!"

"It must not be!" I glanced about me. I closed my eyes. I fixed my gaze on Bulger, but all in vain—no help came to me.

A cold perspiration stood on my brow.

Suddenly, a huge parrot which was perched on a bamboo cage at one end of the room, uttered a harsh cry.

Quicker than it takes to tell it, I called Bulger to my side and set him teasing the bird.

He was not averse to enter upon the sport.

When it was well under way, I approached the bird from the rear, and as he bent forward to repel Bulger's familiarity, I deftly laid hold of one of his longest tail-feathers and pulled it out. An ear-splitting yell went up, and the two ladies threw themselves towards their pet with a thousand tearful expressions of pity and endearment.

I now turned my attentions to Slim Lim.

Drawing a pair of tiny shears from my pocket, I caught at the end of his cue and snipped off an inch of it.

My audacity struck him dumb. He could only stare at me with wide opened mouth.

I set to work now in good earnest.

Drawing some silk threads from my sleeve, I fitted the hair into the quill with such nimble, cunning fingers that Slim Lim looked on quite awe-struck.

"The brush is ready, Lord of the Peacock Feather!" I cried, laying it down in front of him. "And the paper too!" I continued, drawing out a paper mat from under a curio and turning up the white underside.

He followed my movements as a child would those of a necromancer.

Ink now was only lacking!

With one of my most winning smiles I drew near the ladies, and thus addressed them:

"Fasten forever the images of your beautiful faces upon the pages of my memory by lending me the jar of ebon pigment with which you add lustre to those matchless arches that shade your eyes!"

They returned my smile with entrancing grace and sweetness. But what was more pleasing still, they granted my request.

Halting for a moment at the cage of my friend, the parrot, who ruffled his feathers and eyed me most suspiciously, to moisten the pigment from his drinking vessel, I then strode with an air of triumph back to the table where Slim Lim sat nervously fanning himself, and said:

"Most noble Lord of the Peacock Feather, thy dull-witted, misshapen and worthless slave hath prepared brush, ink and paper; deign to set thy most honorable sign-manual to this paper so that he may withdraw his poor, miserable body and limbs from beneath thy sacred roof!"

So saying, I held out the brush to Slim Lim.

With trembling hand he took hold of it and rapidly traced the mysterious characters which were destined to open every gate and unbar every door until I stood once more on shipboard bound for my native land.

Folding up the precious document, I thrust it into my sailor's pouch. But while I was flushed with victory, Slim Lim showed only too plainly that he was nearly beside himself with chagrin and vexation.

The ladies of his household approached him with most profound obeisances and with loud and deep-drawn sighs at every step. But Slim Lim repulsed them in the rudest manner. He would have none of their sympathy, none of their pity or tender offices.

They redoubled their efforts; their sighs became more tender and louder.

It was all in vain.

Slim Lim was determined not to be propitiated.

Turning to me, he cried out:

"Let the barbarian, the son of a barbarian, the grandson of a barbarian, the great-grandson of a barbarian, the great-great-grandson of a barbarian, the geat-great-great-grandson of a barbarian, the great-great-great-great-grandson of a barbarian inscribe his wretched, worthless, mean, common, ordinary, insignificant and despicable name upon a sheet of paper ere he

goes forth, so that I and my children, and my children's children, and my children's children's children, and my children's children's children's children may speak it with contempt!"

And then, in order to prove to me that he considered himself disgraced to sit in my presence, he threw himself full length upon the floor.

Bulger got it into his head that this strange proceeding was in some way a menace to me, for he walked cautiously around Slim Lim, sniffing at him and growling in a threatening way, as if to say: "Don't play any tricks on my little master, or it will go hard with you!"

The ladies of Slim Lim's household were nearly crazed with grief and anxiety.

I assured them of my protection, but this only seemed to increase their solicitation.

To tell the truth, however, I was not half so calm as I appeared to be.

Cruel fate seemed to have woven her meshes about me once again.

Slim Lim, with deep cunning, had set another task for me which seemed so impossible of performance that he doubtless was already congratulating himself and applauding his own skilfully devised plan for holding me prisoner.

He had demanded that I should "write my name" before going forth; he had been most careful to use the word "write" so that I should not be permitted to use a brush after the manner of his people; but must have recourse to a pen after the manner of my own.

Feeling pretty confident in his mind that I would not have a pen in my possession, he had ground for flattering himself that I was still in his power.

Bulger caught a glimpse of the shadow that had settled upon my face, and whined nervously.

A thought struck me!

A quill will save me!

I looked towards the parrot.

Ah! deep-laid plan to rob me of my liberty!

BULGER HOLDING SLIM LIM DOWN, WHILE I CUT A PEN ON HIS LITTLE FINGER NAIL.

The bird had been removed from the room.

The brush I had fashioned—the pigment, too, were gone!

I could feel my knees grow weak.

My breath came short and quick.

A cold chill crept over me.

There lay the Lord of the Peacock Feather flat on his back, but as I turned my glance quickly upon him, I was sure that one of his eyes was half open and fixed upon me, while a faint ripple of a smile played in the corners of his mouth most maliciously.

"Ah! man of guile!" thought I, "thou shalt not triumph, for I am about to shatter this last one of thy fetters, which thou dost think is already so firmly riveted upon my wrists. Thou art wise and thou art subtle, but not so wise and not so subtle as the little baron who stands beside thee!"

"To me, Bulger!" I cried.

With a single bound he reached my side.

"Take thy place there!" I continued, pointing to Slim Lim's breast, "and if my enemy moves but the poor space of a narrow inch, do thy duty!"

Bulger sprang lightly upon Slim Lim's breast, and with a low growl gave him to understand that there must be no trifling.

Then my turn came to act.

Whipping my pocket-knife out, I laid hold of Slim Lim's hand, and in less than a minute's time I cut a fine pen, with an excellent nib, on the end of the long nail of his little finger.

Bulger looked on very much interested, giving a low growl every time Slim Lim showed the slightest indication of resenting the treatment to which I was subjecting him.

My ink?

That was a simple matter. Pricking my thumb with the point of my knife, I let a few drops of the crimson fluid collect on the palm of my hand. Then, reaching out for one of the paper mats, I dipped the pen which now graced the little finger of the Lord of the Peacock Feather, and set my signature on the uncolored side of the mat in a neat, round hand.

Bidding Bulger descend from his post of honor, I now held out my hand to his excellency, the Taou-tai, with these words:

"Rise, Sir Knight of the Plain Red Button; be generous as thou art noble; I have triumphed! Forgive my audacity. In my place, thou wouldst have done likewise. Let thy enemy become thy friend. In birth, noble; in letters, learned; in arts, skilled; he is more worthy of thy friendship than deserving of thy enmity!"

Slim Lim seized my hand, and sprang to his feet with a good-humored smile on his broad face.

"By the sacred countenance of the Child of the Sun, Lord of all the Orders, thou art very clever for thy size!" he exclaimed, as he conducted me to a seat.

The ladies of the Taou-tai's household, who had retreated horror-stricken to their apartments, were now summoned to appear.

Tea was brewed and the Lord of the Peacock Feather insisted upon serving me with his own hands.

I was almost crazed with joy at thought of setting out for home under such happy auspices.

Bulger made friends with Slim Lim, and everybody forgave everybody.

His excellency, the Taou-tai, prevailed upon me to pass the night under his roof, assuring me that in the morning I should have a special escort, his own port-chaise, and hampers packed in his own kitchen for my refreshment while on my joureny to the seaport.

Until a late hour Slim Lim, the ladies of his household, Bulger and I gave ourselves up to feasting and merrymaking. In the morning I took my leave of the Taou-tai and his household in the happiest frame of mind.

A short week found me on board of a good staunch vessel bound for home again.

As the sails filled and we sped out of the harbor, I drew Bulger to my breast and the tears fell thick and fast. He licked my hands and face, and fixed his large, lustrous eyes full upon me.

He could not, and I would not, speak.

CHAPTER IX.

How I grew weary of travel and resolved to settle down for a long rest. A quiet life however soon tires me, and I desire to set out again. Bulger's opposition. How I deceived him. We take our departure. Encounter a terrible storm. Are shipwrecked on a beautiful Island. Made prisoners by the Round Bodies. Description of this strange people. We are condemned to die. Saved by Rōlâ-Bōlâ, the Round-body Princess. More about the strange beings. The Princess falls in love with me. Preparations for marriage. The ceremony on the Great Plain. The sudden storm. Consternation of the Round Bodies. I lash Bulger and myself to a platform. The storm-king catches up the wooden structure and bears it away. Transported to the main land on the wings of the wind. We are gently dropped in a grain field not a thousand miles from home. Our unspeakable joy.

A GOOD MOTHER ROUNDBODY AMUSING HER CHILDREN.

At this period of my life I had firmly resolved to settle down and enjoy a good, long rest.

Bulger and I both needed it. We were tired of strange sights, strange lands and strange people.

"Why should we not," thought I, "enjoy our world-wide fame?"

From the very ends of the earth, visitors flocked in thousands to my House Wonderful to see my treasures, my extraordinary curiosities, and above all, my remarkable dog, Bulger, the sole companion of my strange and eventful life, my guide, my friend, my counsellor, my all. Scarcely, however, were the valleys green again after a long and bitterly cold winter—so cold in fact that I drank nothing but iced tea for full three months, as it was utterly impossible to carry the pot from the stove to the table quickly enough to prevent its freezing,—than my thoughts

turned to the pleasures and dangers of a roving life, and I longed to be up and off again in quest of new adventures.

As I roused myself from my reverie I found Bulger sitting at my feet with his kind, lustrous eyes fixed full upon my face. He had read my thoughts as correctly and easily as I might the words of a child's primer, and as he saw that I was wide awake and in full possession of my faculties, he seized hold of my sleeve and whined most piteously.

Dear, faithful animal! Oh, that I had heeded thy remonstrance!

But no, it was not to be.

Unwilling to fret and worry good Bulger, I now resolved to make use of a faculty which had no place in his nature—namely hypocrisy.

When he was in my presence I pretended to be perfectly happy and contented, going about laughing, singing and dancing; but the very moment he had quitted the room I set to work making ready for another journey.

At last all was ready.

When Bulger entered the house and set eyes upon boxes and packages, he lifted his head and gave one long, dismal howl of entreaty; but seeing that my purpose was fixed, like a true and faithful servitor, he bounded to my side and licked my outstretched hand, as much as to say: "Thy road is my road, thy fate is my fate!"

In a few hours we were on our way to the sea-board.

My heart was light, my spirits buoyant and gay.

"What is life?" I cried. "Am I a worm to vegetate in mold and darknss? Nay! I am a creature of intelligence, of mind, of soul; the air, the sun-light, the boundless universe, are mine; I will enjoy them."

Luckily I had not long to wait in the seaport, for a good, staunch vessel was nearly loaded.

Learning that she was bound for the Southern ocean, I at once ordered my effects to be set on board, and before the new moon had lost its crescent I was on the high seas with my faithful Bulger by my side and a bounding heart beating joyful music in my breast.

For a while all went well.

Bulger seemed to have gotten over his strange presentiment of evil and romped about the deck with all his old-time love of mirth and jollity. But upon me, however, after our good vessel was a few days out, there came a strange feeling never experienced before.

In my dreams, light and darkness alternately oppressed me; the one more dazzling than the electric flash, the other deeper than earthly night.

Our seventh day out, at high noon, suddenly it seemed as if some mighty hand had drawn a vast and impenetrable curtain of inky blackness over the entire sky. It almost appeared as if some terrible demon of the skies had suddenly blown out the very sun itself.

Bulger, with one bound, gained my side, and, fastening his teeth in my sash, moaned piteously, as was his custom when he thought my life in danger. I stooped and stroked his head. The palm of my hand felt the hot tears that were streaming from his eyes. Just then the vessel gave a lurch, and Bulger's weight tore his teeth from their hold in my sash, and in an instant he was separated from me. I heard his supplicating bark in a distant part of the ship.

"Bulger! Bulger!" I cried, "here! here! this way, to me, to me!" and in my desperation at thought of losing my loved companion, I darted in the direction of the barking, regardless of the black night which enveloped us, and stumbling over some object fell headlong on the deck.

My fall stunned me.

I rose upon my elbow and passed my hand over my eyes like a person just waking from a deep sleep.

Sulphurous flames now darted from the four quarters of the heavens, and crash upon crash of deafening thunder rattled and pealed over our heads.

A terrific blast of wind caught up our ship like a cockle shell and hurled it along through the seething, bubbling, maddened waters at such a fearful rate that every instant it seemed as if she must go to the bottom.

I know not how long we were driven along at this furious speed, for I was half dazed by the roar of the warring elements and blinded by the continuous flashing of the lightning. To my horror, the sound of terrible blows, dull but awful in their energy, now fell upon my ears.

We had struck upon the rocks, and our ship was pounding out her own life beneath my very feet.

Instinctively I called upon my faithful Bulger.

But not the voice of brazen throat and lungs could overcome the din of that tempest.

The intense darkness was now dissipated by showers of meteoric fire, which fell like ten times ten thousand bursting rockets as far as the eye could reach. And then deep rifts broke in the inky mantle of the heavens and showers of hail stones, each as large as a goose egg, rattled with the fury of musketry upon the deck.

At that moment a lurch of the vessel had rolled me under a huge copper kettle or my life would have been beaten out of me.

"Farewell, dear Bulger!" I cried, in a tear-strangled voice, "this terrible discharge from heaven's frozen artillery will surely end thy life! Farewell, faithful dog; a long farewell!"

Gradually this terrifying shower of huge hail-stones lessened its fury, and strange to say, in doing so the falling stones drew most wonderful music from the great copper kettle which covered me like a huge buckler.

The wind moaned a deep bass and the pounding of the vessel kept time like some gigantic drum.

Although half-dead with fear, I listened with ecstatic pleasure to this awful concert played by the warring forces of nature. When it had ceased, I looked out from my hiding-place.

Not a living soul was in sight. Every seaman and officer had perished beneath the strokes of the lightning, been crushed by the fall of hail, or swept by the resistless gale into the seething ocean.

So calm did it grow that I was beginning to take heart, when with a terrific swish and whirr, as if slit by some gigantic knife,

the clouds parted and from the rent rushed blinding drifts of snow with such a wild and startling sweep and whirl that my knees swote together and I fell upon my face in utter despair.

But look! Had heaven slain the monster of the storm?

The snow was blood-red.

The sight froze the very marrow of my bones.

I rolled over upon my back; my senses fled; death seemed to have overtaken me.

How long I lay in this stupor I know not, but when I awoke the storm had spent its fury, the sun was sending down its brightest rays, the air was pleasantly cool and bracing.

Slowly my strength came back to me, and I emerged from my hiding-place, crawling on my hands and feet, for I was too weak to stand upright at first. Little by little, however, I took heart, and, as I felt my blood go tingling thro' my veins, I made an effort and rose to my feet.

Yes, my worst fears had been realized.

Not a living being had survived the storm.

As I walked upon the blood-red snow, every foot-fall brought forth most piteous sighs and groans.

"What dread warning," thought I, "does this mysterious murmuring give me? What is the meaning of these sobs and moans which issue from these crimson crystals beneath the pressure of my feet? Am I walking upon the blood of my ancestors?"

Clinging to the frozen sheets, I crept slowly along the red-encrusted deck.

But stay!

Hark!

Are my ears playing me still more fantastic tricks?

No! I'm wholly and entirely myself now, and as sure as the blood of the Trumps' courses through my veins, that bark came from my faithful dog!

"Bulger lives! Bulger lives!" I cried out in accents of the wildest joy; and breaking away from the hold of fear and trepidation, I rushed boldly forward, calling out "I'm coming, Bulger, I'm coming!" With reckless courage I sprang from

one frozen plank to another, until I stood upon the quarter-deck. There, upon the hatch, sat, or rather lay, Bulger, for his life was almost extinct. His teeth were locked upon the straps of a life-preserver which he, ever thoughtful of my safety, was about to bring to me at the first outbreak of the storm, when its fury forced him to seek refuge under a water-cask, as his tracks on the snow indicated.

As quickly as my stiffened limbs would permit, I bounded forward, and throwing myself on my knees in the crimson snow, —which sent forth most heart-rending groans and sighs at the pressure of my body upon its blood-red surface—I clasped Bulger in my arms and our cries of joy mingled,—our tears ran together.

All my suffering was forgotten in that moment, for Bulger was alive, his head was clasped to my breast.

The winds had now fallen, the sea had grown calm again, and I determined at once to quit the wreck if possible, for the setting sun revealed to me the shores of a beautiful land at the mouth of a small but extremely picturesque river, whose banks were rich in palm-trees, fruit-trees and flowering shrubs.

I lost no time in lowering one of the boats which had happily escaped with slight injuries, and being an expert seaman, I found no difficulty in rigging a tackle and lowering first, Bulger, and then myself into the boat, and paddling leisurely towards the shore.

Here I drew the boat high and dry on the beach, and calling out gayly to faithful Bulger to follow me, I clambered up the bank and pushed boldly forward to survey the fair land upon which a strange fate had set our feet.

Now, for the first, I became conscious of the terrible hunger that was gnawing at my vitals—a fact which proved to me that I must have lain in an unconscious state beneath the huge kettle for at least two days if not more.

Bulger raised his kind eyes to me, and then bounding off to one of the fruit trees, ran around it, barking joyfully.

I shook one of the branches and the ripe fruit fell in abundance to the ground.

Its odor was so delicious that although it was unknown to

me, I had no hesitation in partaking of it most freely, Bulger following my example, a fact which convinced me that it could not be otherwise than wholesome. A long, deep draught from a limpid spring refreshed us both greatly; but as the sun was sinking rapidly, and as I now began to feel the effects of the rack, strain and weariness resulting from the terrible experience of the past day or so, I called out to Bulger:

"Come, dear, faithful fellow, let us seek out a fit place to pass the night; some nook shielded by wide-spreading branches, where there is plenty of soft boughs to make a bed with.

As the country was quite level, I sighted a grove at some distance, and thither we directed our steps.

It had now grown quite dark. We quickened our pace, for I was too prudent a traveler to care to expose myself to the night dew.

As we drew near the grove there appeared to be a low wall on one side of it.

"This way, Bulger," said I, "this long line of boulders will protect us from the night winds, if any should rise. Let us creep under its edge and lay our tired limbs down on the soft grass." He looked up with softened gaze and gave one or two consenting wags to his tail.

Nestling close under the edges of several of the largest of the boulders, at a point where they formed a sort of sheltered nook, we soon fell into a deep sleep, I sitting half upright and Bulger pillowing his head upon my lap.

Once or twice in the course of the night I awoke to find my brow beaded with perspiration. I put my hand on Bulger; he too was awake, and his tongue was lolling from his mouth. Both of us seemed to have been seized with a strange fever. The direst forebodings took possession of me. Had we landed upon a shore along which lurked some deadly miasm? Possibly we might not live to see the light of another day. It required all my self-control to banish such terrible thoughts from my mind. But so tired was I to the very bone that I soon fell asleep again, reassured as I was by the example set me by Bulger. It was, however, a fitful slumber, for the heat

of our bodies had now become so great that the very ground upon which we were lying felt warm to my touch. At length, to my joy, I caught the first, faint glimpse of the dawn. I was now in a perfect glow from head to foot. And so was Bulger. Suddenly it burst upon my mind that possibly we might have lain down in a volcanic region; that, mayhap, fierce, subterranean fires were raging beneath our very heads. I rose to my knees with a bound, and placed both of my hands upon the nearest boulder. Fancy my horror upon feeling that its surface was not only hot, but that it yielded to the pressure of my hands, and gave forth groans, hissings and rumblings. In an instant I was on my feet. Bulger did not wait to be called. Determined to verify my suspicions,—for discretion was always a reasonable part of my valor, I hastened from one boulder to another within the circle where we had been lying, and pressed my hands upon them with all my strength. Deep, rumbling and hissing sounds came forth from the ground everywhere about me, and seemed to awaken responsive cries far and near, as if one giant tossing in his sleep disturbed the slumbers of his fellows.

"Bulger!" I cried, "we stand upon the ground of death; this is but the outer wall of a crater, it is aglow with subterranean heat; only the merest shell—so thin that it yields to my pressure—is between us and destruction. Fly, fly, faithful dog!"

The morning sun now burst forth with a flood of golden light.

As far as my eye could reach, extended this same boulder-like parapet, shutting out my gaze from the abyss through which the volcano was now about to spout its liquid fire; for all at once the boulders began to rock from side to side, giving forth such dreadful rumblings that I knew the eruption was to be preceded by an earthquake.

A sickening fear seized hold of me; my legs bent like pipe stems, beneath the weight of my body.

Bulger saw that his loved master was chained to the ground.

He refused to abandon me.

The whole wall, as far as my eye could reach, now trembled and rocked, threatening to engulf us every instant.

With a mighty effort I pulled myself together, and, followed by Bulger, darted away.

The measure of my horror was not complete.

With terrific rumblings, gurglings, hissing and groaning, the whole row of rocks now danced in violent agitation, and then, like so many gigantic balls, rolled by huge monsters at play, these boulders, propelled with fearful violence by the outburst of the volcano—as I supposed—came thundering down after our retreating forms, threatening us with a terrible death.

Bulger, running at my side, ever and anon sent out a mournful whine, as if to bid me an eternal farewell.

"Fly, Bulger! Faster, faster, good Bulger!" I called to him, as the roar and rumble of the advancing wall increased.

Now each and every boulder seemed urged on its course by some mysterious force of its own.

As I glanced over my shoulder, I could see that they were gaining in velocity, bounding, springing, now in single file, now three abreast, while the frightful and unearthly din and rumble went ever on increasing.

They were gaining upon us.

My legs again threatened to bend under the weight of my body and topple it over to certain and awful death, when a last glance revealed to me the terrible truth.

"Bulger! they are alive!"

A sharp, despairing yelp came from my poor dog.

"They're alive, I tell you! Some legion of monsters, devils, for aught I know, escaped from the depths of Tartarus, intent to roll over us and crush the life from our puny bodies!"

Again we redoubled our efforts.

"For your life, Bulger!" I gasped, "for your life! Look! the wood, the wood!"

He caught my meaning, and gave a sharp, encouraging bark.

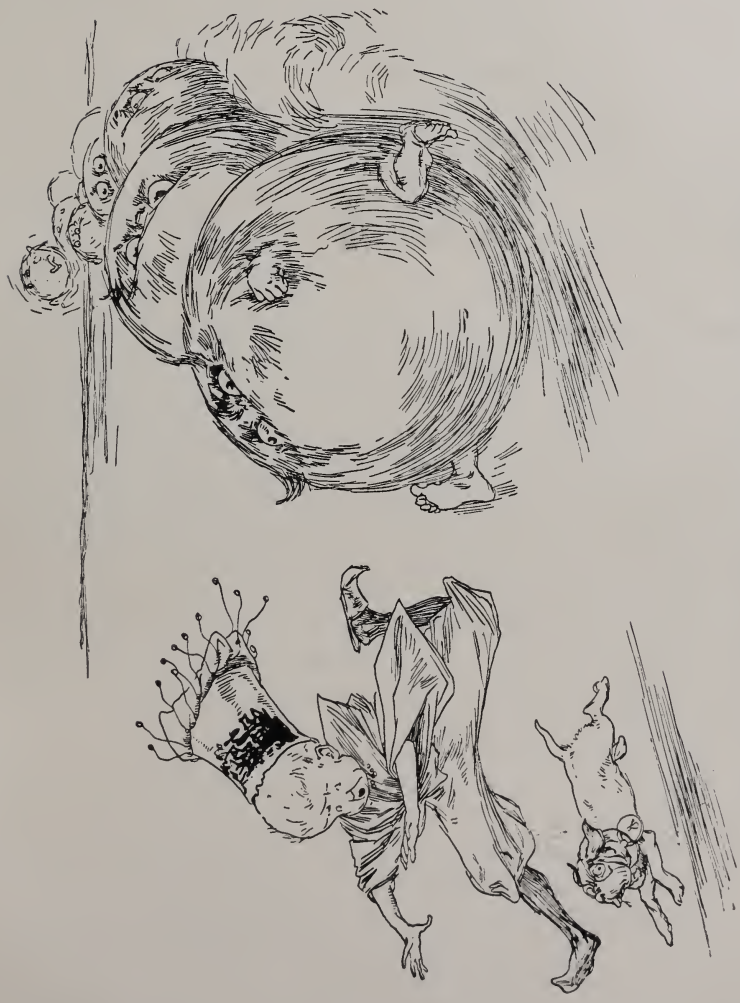
But no, it was useless.

My strength had been used to its last poor throb.

It grew dark before my eyes.

A palsying fear laid hold of my heart.

My limbs stiffened.



BULGER'S AND MY WILD FLIGHT WHEN PURSUED BY THE ROUNDHEADS.

I threw one last glance upon Bulger.

He answered me with a look of most tender affection, and then we both tripped, staggered, stumbled, fell headlong, side by side, while seemingly ten thousand living boulders, with awful shrieks, groans, and gurgling sounds, hung like a shadow over us for an instant, and all was black as night.

I felt my protuberant brow ground into the earth and the last bit of life crushed out of me.

My last though was:

"Bulger! O, Bulger! What a terrible death! But O, what a kind Providence to let us die together!"

* * * * * *

"Rise! stunted, misshapen thing! Rise! thou wafer man, thou slice of humanity with cleft edges!"

It was not so much the thundering tones of this strange, human monster which caused me to sit bolt upright, rub my eyes and make a superhuman effort to collect my sadly scattered senses, as it was the caresses of my faithful Bulger, who was running from one side of me to the other, showering kisses upon my face and hands and whining piteously.

After a hard struggle the shadows were lifted from my eyes. My heart sank within me at sight of that wall of living boulders encircling us, with their fierce visages turned, half in wonder, half in rage, upon the, to them, two funny beings as utterly unlike themselves as each other.

But love is always stronger than fear.

Stretching out my arms and drawing Bulger close to my breast, I cried out:

"O, Bulger! do I really live? Am I not still the object of some demon's sportive malice?"

At sound of my voice the round-bodied monsters broke out into a hideous chorus of deep, rumbling laughter, during which their bodies rolled from side to side.

Then, as they pressed wildly forward, with fierce ejaculations of anger or impatience, it seemed as if Bulger and I had been only saved from one death to be set face to face with another.

Alas! is there no power," thought I, "to save us from the furious impatience of these reckless monsters?"

Suddenly a terrible voice sounded loud above the din:

"Roll backward, Round bodies! What meaneth this unseemly impatience in the presence of your King?"

In an instant, the round-bodied monsters rolled silently backwards.

All was calm again.

Turning to his neighbor, the King exclaimed, with a gurgling laugh:

"Why, by my royal girth, its voice is all the world like one of the toy pipes of our baby prince!"

"'Its? Its?'" I repeated, with fire flashing from my upturned eyes. "Know, Sir Monster, that I am not a 'thing,' but a perfect man; a baron by birth, a scholar by profession, a traveler by choice."

At this outburst on my part, the crowd of living balls again sent up a deep, rumbling peel of laughter.

"Silence!" commanded the King, and then he continued:

"Well, well, then, baron,—whatever that may be—but I think I ought to say 'little baron,' for by my royal roundness, thou art a wee, puny being! Let it be as thou sayest, but tell me, I implore thee, what is this walking box on four legs, which nature seems to have left unfinished?"

And so saying, he raised his terrible hand with fingers strong enough to crush me as I might a puff-ball, and waved it toward Bulger.

This contemptuous sneer did not escape Bulger.

He broke out into a volume of sharp, angry barks, and showed his white teeth in the most threatening manner.

Upon which the monsters rolled back in mock terror and consternation, crying out:

"The King! The King! Save the King! The walking box is filled with explosives; it may fly into pieces!"

When the hubbub was over, and the King had commanded silence, I stepped boldly forward and exclaimed:

"Unfinished! What meanest thou, thou globe-shaped monster?"

The term "globe" seemed to please his majesty very much.

A great, wrinkled smile overran his huge countenance.

"Mean?" he ejaculated, with a deep, gurgling, chuckling laugh. "Mean? why, little baron—whatever that may be—see for thyself. Has not Nature left useless flaps at one end of the box, and a still more useless bit of rope hanging down from the other?"

This insulting allusion to Bulger's ears and tail seemed to be perfectly understood by him, for he fairly bristled with rage, and advanced upon the round-bodied monster, snapping, snarling, and showing his teeth.

Whereupon the deep, rumbling laughter again broke forth, and the cry, "Save the King! Save the King!" went up in mock earnestness.

Having succeeded in appeasing Bulger's anger by means of a few affectionate words and tender caresses, I determined to make inquiry as to our whereabouts, and to ascertain who the strange beings were among whom capricious fate had so unceremoniously cast Bulger and me.

"Where are we, ball-shaped giant?" I inquired in my strongest voice, "and who are you?"

Again the monster screwed his leathery face up in a deep, wrinkled smile. The reason of his good will, as I afterwards learned, arose from the fact that I had bestowed the terms "globe," "round," "ball-shaped," etc., upon him, for it seemed that these wonderfully formed beings were extremely vain of their roundness, and that nothing could be uttered more pleasing and complimentary to them than to make use of such words and expressions as "ball," "orb," "sphere," "round-bodied," "bullet-shaped," etc.; that in their land, the greatest dignities honors and titles of nobility were awarded those whose bodies showed most perfect roundness; that in proportion as one's body deviated from the shape of a true sphere, he became degraded and excluded from society.

To such wretched subjects the King assigned the performance of all mean labor. They were the "squares," or outcasts, whom anybody might insult or even enslave with impunity. The

richer ones were sometimes able to hide their deformity by means of padding, and in this manner conceal their uneven motion in rolling from the keen eyes of the King; but the poor ones, by their inability to correct their physical defects, at once attracted the King's attention, when he caused his people to roll up and down before him, while he kept up a searching look-out for "wabblers" or uneven rollers.

"Well, little baron—whatever that may be," replied the King, or shall I call thee Wafer-man with cleft edges? Know, then, that I am King Bô-gôô-gôô, Monarch of the Roundbodies; that these are some of my subjects.

Know, furthermore, little baron—whatever that may be—that this island is my kingdom, in which no one rules saving me, and that unless it may please my royal daughter Rōlâ-Bōlâ to keep thee and thy attendant, the walking box with cord and flaps, as curiosities to amuse her, thou and thy companion perish at sundown, for, little baron—whatever that may be—it is my royal will, and so it was my father's, and his father's, and so back a thousand years, that no living creature shall set foot upon the shores of my domain and not pay for his temerity by being crushed to death, literally ground into the soil, until he become a very part of it!"

Bulger appeared to grasp the meaning of this fierce speech, which was delivered in thundering tones, and accompanied by hideous contortions of the speaker's great, round visage, flaming as the crimson disc of a tropical sun in the western sky, and followed by an outburst of grunts, groans and gurglings from the assembled Roundbodies; and, in spite of his inborn courage, his tail fell between his legs and he slunk nearer to me with a low, anxious whine.

But when good Bulger saw the calm expression of my countenance, he quickly recovered himself; his tail resumed its graceful curl, and as I faced King Bô-gôô-gôô with an unruffled exterior, to make reply to the latter's horrible threat, Bulger, too, placed himself at my side with a defiant air.

"Most gracious Sphere! Most royal Globe! Roundest monarch of the great, round world! true, I have set foot on the

shores of thy domain, but it was not, most majestic Sphericity, through choice. A fearful storm, in which the warring elements seemed bent upon the destruction of the universe, during which the great ocean hurled itself against the walls of heaven as if to beat out the very stars, while the wide-mouthed gale swooped down upon this petty earth with seeming intent to swallow it and all it contained—"

I could speak no further.

The Roundbodies broke in upon me with such dismal groans and cries that I stood as if rooted to the earth.

"Ah!" thought I, "they, too, felt the terrible blows of that storm-demon which so nearly beat out the life from mine and from Bulger's bodies!"

Waving my hand as a signal for silence, I proceeded:

"I bow before the will of thy spherical Majesty, whatever it may be! At the same time, I would beg to call the attention of your Imperial Roundness to the fact that, in the systems o law of all the nations of the globe, a man may not be held responsible for an act which he is made to commit by a force or strength greater than his own."

I saw thatmy flattery was telling upon King Bô-gôô-gôô, so I proceeded to make a still further application of the same remedy:

"However, most Royal Globe and perfect Sphere of Strength and Beauty, if, in thy great wisdom, thou dost decide that we must die, crushed beneath the weight of thy people's bodies, so be it! Great ball-shaped monarch, I am but a bit and shred of humanity, and how may I dare to oppose the will of your right royal Sphericity?"

King Bô-gôô-gôô smiled till his huge double teeth could be seen glittering in his cavernous mouth, like white rocks in a half-lighted pit, and his body swayed from one side to another in his gigantic glee.

"Send for the royal princess!" he roared.

In a few seconds, in answer to his command, a Roundbody came rolling across the plain with the swiftness of the wind.

The crowd of retainers fell back, and the new-comer arrested her flight by the side of King Bô-gôô-gôô.

I could not see that she was a bit more beautiful than those about her, although she was a royal princess.

True, she was a globe of smaller girth, her face was somewhat less repellent and beneath a long and heavy fringe of lashes, I caught glimpses of a pair of good-natured, roguish eyes, and my perfect knowledge of human and brute nature told me at a glance that if I could but gain the good will of that strange being, Bulger and I would be safe!

"My dear, little round papa," cried Rōlâ-Bōlâ—for such proved to be her name, "Where did those funny things come from? Are they really alive? Wont they bite or sting? What do they eat? What shall I keep them in? Will you make me a cage for them? Oh, I am so, so, so, so, so, so, so, so, so glad!" and she bounded about, now this way, now that, now into the air like an animated rubber ball, drumming like a partridge all the while.

Behold us, then, Bulger and me, prisoners in the land of the Roundbodies, with the Princess Rōlâ-Bōlâ as our keeper!

Hope sank low within our poor hearts.

I dared not breathe a word in opposition to the will of King Bô-gôô-gôô or the caprice of Rōlâ-Bōlâ lest the order should be revoked.

At least, in the keeping of the Princess Rōlâ-Bōlâ, we would be more likely to receive gentle treatment, and, what was almost a matter of life and death, we should have great chances of making our escape from the island of King Bô-gôô-gôô.

We were commanded to follow the Princess.

As Bulger and I started after Rōlâ-Bola, with a brisk gait, the very clouds fairly snapt asunder, so great was the shout of laughter which the Roundbodies sent up.

Seemingly, it had not occurred to them until that moment how ridiculously different our mode of locomotion was from theirs.

"Look! look! O, King!" they cried, "he can neither roll nor hop! See how he edges along, leaning first on one foot and

then on the other! He walks on his toe nails! Mark his companion, too! What monsters of clumsiness! How they rock and wabble! Why doth he not spring? Why doth he pound the earth as if he were beating flax?"

To all this mocking and jeering, Bulger and I turned a deaf ear, following our mistress, who ever and anon, turned her soft, black, mischievous eyes encouragingly upon us, as her head came uppermost.

Imagine our surprise when Rōlâ-Bōlâ halted at the beginning of a path having a gentle descent, and said:

"This is the entrance to the royal habitation. Follow me and fear nothing."

In a few moments we found ourselves in the outer room of a vast underground dwelling, consisting of corridors, chambers, dormitories, banquet-halls and arenas.

All the habitations of the Roundbodies are subterranean.

Why?

This you shall know anon.

Bulger and I were conducted to very pleasant quarters—well-lighted, as were all the rooms of the palace, by means of vast slabs of rock crystal, of which the roof was made, by a "square" or "lôb-bô" as he is called in the language of the Roundbodies, that is, one not perfectly round in form, and hence degraded to the position of serving man. Doubtless long before this, the reader has grown impatient at my silence concerning the strange beings among whom Bulger and I now found ourselves prisoners.

Who were the Roundbodies?

Know then, gentle reader, that they were—mark well my words—the sole living creatures on the island of Gô-gû-lâh, upon which a strange fate had cast us. Whether or not any other beings had ever inhabited the island was unknown to them.

I found, upon conversing with their learned men, that there was a legend in existence among them—dim and shadowy in its details, from the long flight of centuries that it had come down through—that many thousands of years ago they had been

quite like human beings, who walk upright, with bodies almost, if not quite, as long as mine; but that owing to the unvarying recurrence of terrible storms, of wind, rain, hail and snow, accompanied by the bursting of deafening thunderbolts, in fact, such as I had experienced, which swept over the island twelve times in the year, coming and going with a regularity as astonishing as their force is terrific, everything upright had long ago been swept from the land; that their ancestors, yielding to the irresistible forces of Nature, had gradually bent their bodies before these resistless winds, until even the time when they walked upright had been forgotten.

This was but the first change wrought by the forces which surrounded them. When overtaken by these wild winds, they soon learned that their only safety lay in rolling themselves up as much into the shape of balls as possible, so that the tornado would be powerless to pick them up and hurl them to destruction.

Another transformation now began to make itself apparent. Their bodies, as centuries came and went, little by little, took on the rounded form they then had.

Still clinging to the desperate chance for life on these storm-swept plains, they drew down their heads and pressed in their limbs until these had made recesses for them, as some tortoises draw their legs so closely to their bodies that the eye fails to distinguish even the outline of the limb.

The last change that came upon these globe-shaped people was a very natural one: their arms took on a greater development of superhuman strength, while their legs grew shorter and shorter, until they consisted of little more than two broad, flexible feet, which they made use of mainly to propel their round bodies like hugh balls across the vast plains of their island home.

Now, while they still dread the terrible blasts, yet is it rather an inherited fear, for at last they have become the true children of the gale.

If it should happen to blow in the direction of their homes, they simply allow it to help them on their way by rolling them

across the plain. While, now and then, a lôb-bô, or "square" Roundbody, so to speak, would be blown into the ocean, yet for nearly a century not a single, genuine Roundbody had been caught up in the pitiless blast. As well might the wind attempt to pick up the round stones of the ocean strand.

One of the things which early attracted my attention in King Bô-gôô-gôô's palace, was the hangings, apparently of the softest leather, worked in mosaic patterns of transcendent beauty.

Imagine my surprise when told by the gentle princess Rōlâ Bōlâ that they were simply the natural leaves from the various trees growing on the island, untouched by dye or stain of any kind.

They were so tough that my strength sufficed not to tear one in two.

Noticing my wide-opened eyes turned inquiringly upon her, the gentle Rōlâ-Bōlâ cried out with a soft, low gurgle:

"Go into the royal garden, Tôô-tôô-lō; that is, little 'flute-man,' and see for thyself."

Now, for the first, I learned the secret of the presence of such beautiful trees and shrubs upon this storm-swept land. Every leaf was as thick and as strong as leather, and the trunks and boughs were exactly of the nature of India rubber, so that, with a small bit which I brought home with me in one of my pockets, I could erase pencil-marks with the greatest ease.

To such foliage as this a tornado had no terrors.

When the storm struck these trees they went to the ground, until it had spent its fury. In a few hours the tropical sun lifted them again, and the beauty of their foliage was quite unharmed.

To return to the poor princess Rōlâ-Bōlâ:

Bulger began to fret and worry beneath the strain of our captivity.

I was constantly on the alert for a chance to escape, but none offered. In fact, we were, I began to fear, prisoners for life.

True, it was a pleasant captivity, for the gentle Rōlâ-Bōlâ almost killed us with dainty feeding, and our only toil was dancing, singing and capering for her amusement.

Night and day, the sole gateway of the royal habitation was

guarded by a triple row of round-bodied sentinels, so fierce-visaged, so mighty-handed, that my heart grew sick as I gazed upon them.

To add to my despair, I now made a discovery which seemed to seal my fate forever—the princess Rōlâ-Bōlâ had become enamored of me!

What to me, at first, had seemed but a playful trick, to wit, her pinching my little toe ever and anon, had, as I was casually informed by one of the learned Roundbodies, in the course of a discussion with him, a terrible significance.

It was a solemn declaration of love!

Oh! miserable me!

And a declaration, too, which, coming from a woman to a man, it was certain, sure, inevitable death to ignore!

And yet I might be saved!

For the custom—made sacred by the observance of long ages—required the man to pursue the woman, who pretended to be frightened and extremely solicitous of escaping him, and while revolving with the same velocity as she, to pinch her little toe in return.

This ended the matter.

The couple was now betrothed.

It was not in the power of man to publish bans of greater strength.

If the man gave one pinch, the marriage was solemnized the following day; if two, the second day after, and so on.

But I was not a Roundbody!

How could I possibly comply with the ancient custom of the land?

Ah! Woman! Woman! it matters not whether thou belongest to the Roundbodies or to the Longbodies, in affairs of the heart thy ingenuity and subtlety overmatch the philosophy of man!

When it was made known to the princess Rōlâ-Bōlâ that the royal counselors had, after mature deliberation, reached the conclusion that the laws of the land—made sacred by the observance of ages—forbade any such union contemplated by

her, she flew into a towering or, rather, I should call it, a bounding passion, for, from one end of her spacious salon to the other, sidewise and lengthwise, she bounded about like a great ball bouncing under the play of an invisible bat.

Alternately she wept, laughed, scolded and threatened.

But it made little difference how she began her tirades, they all had the same ending:

"I say, I shall marry Tôô-tôô-lō!"

King Bô-gôô-gôô, thinking to pacify his daughter, sent her messengers bearing the most beautiful presents; but she received them with disdain, scattering them on the floor.

Things went on this way for several days.

King Bô-gôô-gôô was horrified to find that the princess had eaten nothing for forty-eight hours, and that she was actually losing her beautifully round shape, for which she had so justly been famous.

Bulger saw plainly that something awful was going on, and he, too, became so worked up that he refused to eat or drink.

I passed most of my time going from his room to the princess Rōlâ-Bōlâ's, endeavoring to persuade them to take food.

But all in vain.

One morning the King's daughter met me with demonstrations of the wildest delight, laughing, singing, bounding and rolling about like mad. So beside herself was she that, forgetting her great weight and my puny build, she rolled against me and sent me flying like a little ten-pin struck by a monstrous ball.

By actual measurement I was thrown thirty feet, but, fortunately, struck against a heavy hanging which broke my fall.

Bulger gave a piteous howl.

He seemed to get an idea that Rōlâ-Bōlâ had struck me purposely.

Well, in a word, the cause of this frantic joy was simply this: The princess had finally thought out a solution to the terrible problem which had been for weeks torturing her mind.

Briefly stated, it was as follows:

I should be placed in the boughs of a tree just high enough

to clear her body. She then was to roll under me, and at the right moment, I was to lean downward and pinch her little toe when it came uppermost.

In vain I assured her that I should grow dizzy and fall headlong to the ground, breaking my neck, or, at very least, dislocating it.

But no, I need have no fear.

She would watch over me.

She would turn and catch me in time.

The royal counsellors were at once called together.

The plan of the princess Rōlâ-Bōlâ was laid before them.

At first thy sent up a deep and ominous rumble of disagreement.

But Rola-Bola's messengers were at hand with most costly presents, and it all ended in their finding an almost similar case in their books, where a wounded prince, who was quite unable to roll an inch, had been placed upon an elevated platform in order that his round-bodied sweetheart might pass beneath and he be enabled to pinch her little toe while it was in the air at the highest point from the ground.

Seeing that it would be useless to make further opposition, I now submitted with a good grace, for it was plain to me that once the husband of the princess Rōlâ-Bōlâ I should become, to a certain extent, one of the family and be accorded greater liberty, by means of which I confidently hoped to make my escape from the land of the Roundbodies.

Preparations for the marriage were now begun with extraordinary haste, in order to have all things ready for the first feast-day in the calendar.

As the time drew near, however, I somewhat lost my courage.

"Was I not," I asked myself, "simply lending my aid in forging my own fetters, in laying chains upon my neck, which would render it impossible for Bulger and me ever to set eyes again upon our beloved home?"

I became very nervous, and found it impossible to catch a wink of sleep.

At last I resolved to postpone my fate, at least for several days.

And this was my scheme:—

I should explain to the fair Rōlâ Bōla how utterly impossible it would be for me, in my fright and anxiety, to get my thumb and finger upon her little toe at all, as she revolved swiftly beneath me.

I therefore would implore her to roll very slowly.

And then my scheme would be to seize her foot, hold it fast, and pinch the little toe a score of times at least!

Each pinch would be a clear gain of a day!

Our wedding-day dawned at last.

The King's wine was dealt out to the people with liberal hand.

Mirth and gayety resounded on all sides.

The skies were one vast expanse of cloudless blue.

The flowering shrubs breathed out the most delightful odors.

The air was deliciously balmy.

The painted foliage hung in graceful festoons, unmoved by even a breath of air.

To his evident disgust, Bulger was decorated with a necklace of leaf mosaic of most delicate workmanship.

Had I not reproved him with a shake of the head, he would quickly have shaken off this useless adornment.

Vast crowds of the Roundbodies covered the plain as far as the eye could reach.

Children rolled in troops after their parents, like marbles chasing up a cannon ball.

At times I observed that the mothers, in order to amuse their little ones, or to quell some discussion which had broken out among them, halted by the wayside, and catching up three or four of them, tossed them into the air as a juggler does his balls, sometimes keeping three or more of them on the fly and one in each hand.

It was a strange sight, and amused me so much that I quite insisted upon halting the wedding procession in order that I might observe it more closely.

But the fair Rōlâ-Bōlâ was very impatient, and chided me in unmeasured terms for my lack of dignity.

In fact, I now began to notice a very evident desire on the

part of the managers of the wedding arrangements to hurry things up.

King Bô-gôô-gôô ever and anon turned an anxious eye toward the horizon.

And then there would follow a whispered consultation with the soothsayers and magicians.

Behold me at last mounted upon my—scaffold, I had almost said—for such it seemed to be.

A terrible, tightening sensation took hold of my heart.

The air seemed too heavy to breathe.

I gasped like a fish thrown up on dry land.

"Let the marriage ceremony begin this instant, and move apace!" roared Bô-gôô-gôô.

"Make ready, Tôô-tôô-lō!" cried one of the royal councillors.

I turned to survey the multitude, and then prostrated myself upon the platform under which the princess Rōlâ-Bōlâ was to pass.

"She has started! She comes like the wind! She is here!" Such were the cries which arose from the vast multitude.

With head and shoulders thrust through the opening in the platform, I awaited my bride with bated breath and thumping heart.

Imagine my amazement when I saw her flash beneath me and disappear in the crowd of Roundbodies, almost like a ball from a cannon.

I had scarcely felt her body as it had rolled beneath me.

As for pinching her toe, that was certainly out of the question, seeing that I had only caught a hurried glimpse of her white feet, and then all was gone!

In an instant I was on my legs, and, advancing to the edge of the platform, I raised my hand to signify to King Bô-gôô-gôô that I desired to be heard:

"O, King with the globe-shaped body, hearken unto me! I have been wronged! There is vile treachery here! The judges of the land of Gô-gû-lâh have been corrupted! I demand their blood! Not only have I not pinched the little toe of the royal princess Rōlâ-Bōlâ, but I—"

At this instant, a deep, rumbling noise like a burst of distant artillery, cut short my harangue, by setting the air into such violent vibration that my lips moved without making the slightest sound.

The effect of this terrific "boom" upon the Roundbodies was astounding.

The wildest confusion came upon them.

In vain did King Bô-gôô-gôô command silence.

They rocked like the waves of the sea when struck by a sudden blast.

The most deafening groans and sighs rolled over the plains in a sort of half tuneful unison. Their faces blanched and they pressed together in the most abject fear.

At last King Bô-gôô-gôô was himself again, and, wth a terrific voice, awed his people into silence, crying out:

"Ughgõ! Raûlag pad Oüistimgâr!" (My people, the storm is upon us! Protect yourselves!)

More quickly than it takes me to tell it, the dreaded roar broke in upon the stilly air.

The Roundbodies gathered their children and aged people into a group, and then formed double and triple walls about them.

"Tôô-tôo-lõ! Tôô-too-lõ!"

It was Rõlâ-Bõlâ's voice.

But other thoughts were in my mind at this dread moment.

Again it sounded forth in most piteous accents:

"Tôô-tôô-lõ! Tôô-tôô-lõ!"

To that voice, now, the ears of the dead would have given more heed than mine!

The storm-fiend was galloping amain.

Quicker than thought I swung myself down from the platform, and, encircling Bulger with my left arm, made my way back again.

The good dog was delighted to be with me again, although he was trembling like an aspen leaf at the distant sound of the winds.

He well knew what was coming.

But look! The sunlight is gone!

The very air seems affrighted.

A terrifying tremor of the ground beneath us causes the soles of our feet to tingle and prickle.

"Tôô-tôô-lō! Tôô-tôô-lō!"

It was Rōlâ-Bōlâ calling her lover away from the impending death with which the storm-cloud was fraught.

He was busy with one dearer to him than the weeping princess of the Roundbodies.

Happily the platform had been constructed by lashing together the uprights and flooring by means of hempen cords. To loosen one of these and bind Bulger and myself securely to the wooden structure was the work of a moment.

The Roundbodies had followed my movements in silence, fairly stricken dumb with amazement at what seemed to them the work of a madman.

When they could find their tongues, they motioned to me fiercely to leave the platform, crying:

"Pôô-döeg! Pôô-döeg" (What madness! What madness.!)

But I was not mad!

What is death but a thought?

One may live and yet be dead!

Look! the terrible storm-king is coming! He is a greater monarch than thou, O mighty Bô-gôô-gôô!

"Tôô-tôô-lō! Tôô-tôô-lō!"

It was the kind, good Rōlâ-Bōlâ's last farewell!

From that moment the roar of the coming gale drowned every sound of earth or its puny creatures.

Look again! See the black monster, how he draws nearer and nearer, his huge, shapeless, terrible body rolling and swaying as he rides along on his black wings, while, like a gigantic serpent, his tail drags over the fair earth, hissing, writhing and curling, now on this side, now on that, now coiling upward to gather strength, now beating and threshing the plain with a roar mighty enough to plunge the stoutest heart into despair.

Ah, Bulger! It comes! 'Tis here! We move! It lifts us! Away! Away! We ride on the bosom of the gale! What

a roar! How dark! How black! The storm-king strangles me! Bulger, I die—

* * * * * *

"Where am I? Ah, Bulger, good dog! Has the princess called us yet?

King Bô-gôô-gôô comes to-day.

We must amuse him!"

I made an effort to rise.

The cords held me down.

By degrees the shadows lifted from my mind, and thoughts of the storm-king's coming flashed through my brain, and how he had lifted the platform upon which we were bound, and borne it away, away, as if it were a feather caught up by the wind in play!

Something tickled my cheek.

I raised my head.

Oh! joy unutterable! It was grain! Ay, golden grain! Wheat, ready for the sickle!

We are saved! We must be near the habitations of man!

And so we were.

Nay, more; we were not a thousand miles away from home.

Thus it was a mightier king than Bô-gôô-gôô, one to whom in my despair, I had appealed for aid, caught up my loved Bulger and me and bore us away from Gô-gû-lâh, the Land of the Roundbodies.

And here I end my story.

HOME AGAIN!
THIS TIME FOR A GOOD, LONG REST.

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